

SUBCHAPTER H—RIGHT-OF-WAY AND ENVIRONMENT

PART 710—RIGHT-OF-WAY AND REAL ESTATE

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1.48(b) and (cc), 18.31, and parts 21 and 24; 23 CFR 1.32.

SOURCE: 64 FR 71290, Dec. 21, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 710.101 Purpose.

The primary purpose of the requirements in this part is to ensure the prudent use of Federal funds under title 23 of the United States Code in the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property. In addition to the requirements of this part, other real property related provisions apply and are found at 49 CFR part 24.

§ 710.103 Applicability.

This part applies whenever Federal assistance under title 23 of the United States Code is used. The part applies to programs administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Where Federal funds are transferred to other Federal agencies to administer, those agencies' procedures may be utilized. Additional guidance is available electronically at the FHWA Real Estate services website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/index.htm>

§ 710.105 Definitions.

(a) Terms defined in 49 CFR part 24, and 23 CFR part 1 have the same meaning where used in this part, except as modified in this section.

(b) The following terms where used in this part have the following meaning:

Access rights means the right of ingress to and egress from a property that abuts a street or highway.

Acquiring agency means a State agency, other entity, or person acquiring real property for title 23 of the United States Code purposes.

Acquisition means activities to obtain an interest in, and possession of, real property.

Air rights means real property interests defined by agreement, and conveyed by deed, lease, or permit for the use of airspace.

Airspace means that space located above and/or below a highway or other

transportation facility's established grade line, lying within the horizontal limits of the approved right-of-way or project boundaries.

Damages means the loss in value attributable to remainder property due to severance or consequential damages, as limited by State law, that arise when only part of an owner's property is acquired.

Disposal means the sale of real property or rights therein, including access or air rights, when no longer needed for highway right-of-way or other uses eligible for funding under title 23 of the United States Code.

Donation means the voluntary transfer of privately owned real property for the benefit of a public transportation project without compensation or with compensation at less than fair market value.

Early acquisition means acquisition of real property by State or local governments in advance of Federal authorization or agreement.

Easement means an interest in real property that conveys a right to use a portion of an owner's property or a portion of an owner's rights in the property.

NHS means the National Highway System as defined in 23 U.S.C. 103(b).

Oversight agreement means the project approval and agreement concluded between the State and the FHWA to outline which projects will be monitored at the plans, specifications, and estimate stage by FHWA as required by 23 U.S.C. 106(c)(3).

Real property means land and any improvements thereto, including but not limited to, fee interests, easements, air or access rights, and the rights to control use, leasehold, and leased fee interests.

Relinquishment means the conveyance of a portion of a highway right-of-way or facility by a State highway department to another government agency for continued transportation use. (See 23 CFR part 620, subpart B.)

Right-of-way means real property and rights therein used for the construction, operation, or maintenance of a transportation or related facility funded under title 23 of the United States Code.

Settlement means the result of negotiations based on fair market value in which the amount of just compensation is agreed upon for the purchase of real property or an interest therein. This term includes the following:

(1) An *administrative settlement* is a settlement reached prior to filing a condemnation proceeding based on value related evidence, administrative consideration, or other factors approved by an authorized agency official.

(2) A *legal settlement* is a settlement reached by a responsible State legal representative after filing a condemnation proceeding, including stipulated settlements approved by the court in which the condemnation action had been filed.

(3) A *court settlement* or *court award* is any decision by a court that follows a contested trial or hearing before a jury, commission, judge, or other legal entity having the authority to establish the amount of compensation for a taking under the laws of eminent domain.

State agency means a department, agency, or instrumentality of a State or of a political subdivision of a State; any department, agency, or instrumentality of two or more States or of two or more political subdivisions of a State or States; or any person who has the authority to acquire property by eminent domain, for public purposes, under State law.

State transportation department (STD) means the State highway department, transportation department, or other State transportation agency or commission to which title 23 of the United States Code funds are apportioned.

Uneconomic remnant means a remainder property which the acquiring agency has determined has little or no utility or value to the owner.

Uniform Act means the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Public Law 91-646, 84 Stat. 1894), and the implementing regulations at 49 CFR part 24.

Subpart B—Program Administration

§ 710.201 State responsibilities.

(a) *Organization.* Each STD shall be adequately staffed, equipped, and organized to discharge its real property-related responsibilities.

(b) *Program oversight.* The STD shall have overall responsibility for the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property on Federal-aid projects. This responsibility shall include assuring that acquisitions and disposals by a State agency are made in compliance with legal requirements of State and Federal laws and regulations.

(c) *Right-of-way (ROW) operations manual.* Each STD which receives funding from the highway trust fund shall maintain a manual describing its right-of-way organization, policies, and procedures. The manual shall describe functions and procedures for all phases of the real estate program, including appraisal and appraisal review, negotiation and eminent domain, property management, and relocation assistance. The manual shall also specify procedures to prevent conflict of interest and avoid fraud, waste, and abuse. The manual shall be in sufficient detail and depth to guide State employees and others involved in acquiring and managing real property. The State manuals should be developed and updated, as a minimum, to meet the following schedule:

(1) The STD shall prepare and submit for approval by FHWA an up-to-date Right-of-Way Operations Manual by no later than January 1, 2001.

(2) Every five years thereafter, the chief administrative officer of the STD shall certify to the FHWA that the current ROW operations manual conforms to existing practices and contains necessary procedures to ensure compliance with Federal and State real estate law and regulation.

(3) The STD shall update the manual periodically to reflect changes in operations and submit the updated materials for approval by the FHWA.

(d) *Compliance responsibility.* The STD is responsible for complying with current FHWA requirements whether or not its manual reflects those requirements.

(e) *Adequacy of real property interest.* The real property interest acquired for all Federal-aid projects funded pursuant to title 23 of the United States Code shall be adequate for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the resulting facility and for the protection of both the facility and the traveling public.

(f) *Recordkeeping.* The acquiring agency shall maintain adequate records of its acquisition and property management activities.

(1) Acquisition records, including records related to owner or tenant displacements, and property inventories of improvements acquired shall be in sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with this part and 49 CFR part 24. These records shall be retained at least 3 years from either:

(i) The date the State receives Federal reimbursement of the final payment made to each owner of a property and to each person displaced from a property, or

(ii) The date a credit toward the Federal share of a project is approved based on early acquisition activities of the State.

(2) Property management records shall include inventories of real property considered excess to project needs, all authorized uses of airspace, and other leases or agreements for use of real property managed by the STD.

(g) *Procurement.* Contracting for all activities required in support of State right-of-way programs through use of private consultants and other services shall conform to 49 CFR 18.36.

(h) *Use of other public land acquisition organizations or private consultants.* The STD may enter into written agreements with other State, county, municipal, or local public land acquisition organizations or with private consultants to carry out its authorities under paragraph (b) of this section. Such organizations, firms, or individuals must comply with the policies and practices of the STD. The STD shall monitor any such real property acquisition activities to assure compliance with State and Federal law and requirements and is responsible for informing such organizations of all such requirements and for imposing sanctions in cases of material non-compliance.

(i) *Approval actions.* Except for the Interstate system, the STD and the FHWA will agree on the scope of property related oversight and approval actions that the FHWA will be responsible for under this part. The content of the most recent oversight agreement shall be reflected in the State right-of-way operations manual. The oversight agreement, and thus the manual, will indicate for which non-Interstate Federal-aid project submission of materials for review and approval are required.

(j) *Approval of just compensation.* The amount determined to be just compensation shall be approved by a responsible official of the acquiring agency.

(k) *Description of acquisition process.* The STD shall provide persons affected by projects or acquisitions advanced under title 23 of the United States Code with a written description of its real property acquisition process under State law and of the owner's rights, privileges, and obligations. The description shall be written in clear, non-technical language and, where appropriate, be available in a language other than English.

§ 710.203 Funding and reimbursement.

(a) *General conditions.* The following conditions are a prerequisite to Federal participation in the costs of acquiring real property except as provided in § 710.501 for early acquisition:

(1) The project for which the real property is acquired is included in an approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);

(2) The State has executed a project agreement;

(3) Preliminary acquisition activities, including a title search and preliminary property map preparation necessary for the completion of the environmental process, can be advanced under preliminary engineering prior to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) clearance, while other work involving contact with affected property owners must normally be deferred until after NEPA approval, except as provided in 23 CFR 710.503 for protective buying and hardship acquisition; and in 23 CFR 710.501, early acquisition. Ap-

praisal completion may be authorized as preliminary right-of-way activity prior to completion of the environmental document; and

(4) Costs have been incurred in conformance with State and Federal law requirements.

(b) *Direct eligible costs.* Federal participation in real property costs is limited to the costs of property incorporated into the final project and the associated direct costs of acquisition, unless provided otherwise. Participation is provided for:

(1) *Real property acquisition.* Usual costs and disbursements associated with real property acquisition required under the laws of the State, including the following:

(i) The cost of contracting for private acquisition services or the cost associated with the use of local public agencies.

(ii) The cost of acquisition activities, such as, appraisal, appraisal review, cost estimates, relocation planning, right-of-way plan preparation, title work, and similar necessary right-of-way related work.

(iii) The cost to acquire real property, including incidental expenses.

(iv) The cost of administrative settlements in accordance with 49 CFR 24.102(i), legal settlements, court awards, and costs incidental to the condemnation process.

(v) The cost of minimum payments and appraisal waiver amounts included in the State approved manual.

(2) *Relocation assistance and payments.* Usual costs and disbursements associated with the following:

(i) Relocation assistance and payments required under 49 CFR part 24, and

(ii) Relocation assistance and payments provided under the laws of the State that may exceed the requirements of 49 CFR part 24, except for relocation assistance and payments provided to aliens not lawfully present in the United States.

(3) *Damages.* The cost of severance and/or consequential damages to remaining real property resulting from a partial acquisition, actual or constructive, of real property for a project based on elements compensable under applicable State law.

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(4) *Property management.* The net cost of managing real property prior to and during construction to provide for maintenance, protection, and the clearance and disposal of improvements until final project acceptance.

(5) *Payroll-related expenses and technical guidance.* Salary and related expenses of employees of an acquiring agency are eligible costs in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>). This includes State costs incurred for managing or providing technical guidance, consultation or oversight on projects where right-of-way services are performed by a political subdivision or others.

(6) *Property not incorporated into a project funded under title 23 of the United States Code.* The cost of property not incorporated into a project may be eligible for reimbursement in the following circumstances:

(i) *General.* Costs for construction material sites, property acquisitions to a logical boundary, or for eligible transportation enhancement, sites for disposal of hazardous materials, environmental mitigation, environmental banking activities, or last resort housing.

(ii) *Easements not incorporated into the right-of-way.* The cost of acquiring easements outside the right-of-way for permanent or temporary use.

(7) *Uneconomic remnants.* The cost of uneconomic remnants purchased in connection with the acquisition of a partial taking for the project as required by the Uniform Act.

(8) *Access rights.* Payment for full or partial control of access on an existing highway (*i.e.*, one not on a new location), based on elements compensable under applicable State law. Participation does not depend on another real property interest being acquired or on further construction of the highway facility.

(9) *Utility and railroad property.* (i) The cost to replace operating real property owned by a displaced utility or railroad and conveyed to an STD for a highway project, as provided in 23 CFR part 140, subpart I, Reimbursement for Railroad Work, and 23 CFR part 645, Subpart A, Utility Relocations, Adjustments and Reimbursement, and 23 CFR

part 646, Subpart B, Railroad-Highway Projects.

(ii) Participation in the cost of acquiring non-operating utility or railroad real property shall be in the same manner as that used in the acquisition of other privately owned property.

(c) *Withholding payment.* The FHWA may withhold payment under the conditions in 23 CFR 1.36 where the State fails to comply with Federal law or regulation, State law, or under circumstances of waste, fraud, and abuse.

(d) *Indirect costs.* Indirect costs may be claimed under the provisions of OMB Circular A-87. Indirect costs may be included on Federal-aid billings after the indirect cost rate has been approved by FHWA.

[64 FR 71290, Dec. 21, 1999, as amended at 67 FR 12863, Mar. 20, 2002]

Subpart C—Project Development

§ 710.301 General.

The project development process typically follows a sequence of actions and approvals in order to qualify for funding. The key steps in this process are provided in this subpart.

§ 710.303 Planning.

State and local governments conduct metropolitan and statewide planning to develop coordinated, financially constrained system plans to meet transportation needs for local and statewide systems, under FHWA's planning regulations contained in 23 CFR part 450. In addition, air quality non-attainment areas must meet the requirements of the U.S. EPA Transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR parts 51 and 93). Projects must be included in an approved State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in order to be eligible for Federal-aid funding.

§ 710.305 Environmental analysis.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, as described in FHWA's NEPA regulations in 23 CFR part 771, normally must be conducted and concluded with a record of decision (ROD) or equivalent before Federal funds can be placed under agreement for acquisition of right-of-way. Where

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applicable, a State also must complete Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*) project level conformity analysis. In areas in which the Clean Air Act conformity determination has lapsed, acquiring agencies must coordinate with Federal Highway Administration for special instructions prior to initiating new projects or continuing activity on existing projects. At the time of processing an environmental document, a State may request reimbursement of costs incurred for early acquisition, provided conditions prescribed in 23 U.S.C. 108(c) and 23 CFR 710.501, are satisfied.

§710.307 Project agreement.

As a condition of Federal-aid, the STD shall obtain FHWA authorization in writing or electronically before proceeding with any real property acquisitions, including hardship acquisition and protective buying (see 23 CFR 710.503). The STD must prepare a project agreement in accordance with 23 CFR part 630, subpart C. The agreement shall be based on an acceptable estimate for the cost of acquisition. On projects where the initial project agreement was executed after June 9, 1998, a State may request credit toward the non-Federal share, for early acquisitions, donations, or other contributions applied to the project provided conditions in 23 U.S.C. 323 and 23 CFR 710.501, are satisfied.

§710.309 Acquisition.

The process of acquiring real property includes appraisal, appraisal review, establishing just compensation, negotiations, administrative and legal settlements, and condemnation. The State shall conduct acquisition and related relocation activities in accordance with 49 CFR part 24.

§710.311 Construction advertising.

The State must manage real property acquired for a project until it is required for construction. Clearance of improvements can be scheduled during the acquisition phase of the project using sale/removal agreements, separate demolition contracts, or be included as a work item in the construction contract. On Interstate projects, prior to advertising for construction,

the State shall develop ROW availability statements and certifications related to project acquisitions as required by 23 CFR 635.309. For non-Interstate projects, the oversight agreement must specify responsibility for the review and approval of the ROW availability statements and certifications. Generally, for non-NHS projects, the State has full responsibility for determining that right-of-way is available for construction.

§710.313 Design-build projects.

(a) In the case of a design-build project, right-of-way must be acquired and cleared in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and STD right-of-way procedures. The STD shall submit a right-of-way certification in accordance with 23 CFR 635.309(p) when requesting FHWA's authorization. If the right-of-way services are included in the Request for Proposal document, the STD shall ensure that right-of-way is available prior to the start of physical construction on individual properties.

(b) The decision to advance a right-of-way segment to the construction stage shall not impair the safety or in anyway be coercive in the context of 49 CFR 24.102(h) with respect to unacquired or occupied properties on the same or adjacent segments of project right-of-way.

(c) Certain right-of-way acquisition and clearance services may be incorporated into the design-build contract if allowed under State law. The contract may include language that provides that construction will not commence until all property is acquired and relocations have been completed; or, the construction could be phased or segmented to allow right-of-way activities to be completed on individual properties or a group of properties, thereby allowing certification in a manner satisfactory to the STD for each phase or segment.

(d) If the STD elects to include right-of-way services in the design-build contract, the following provisions must be addressed in the request for proposals document:

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(1)(i) The design-builder must submit written acquisition and relocation procedures to the STD for approval prior to commencing right-of-way activities. These procedures should contain a prioritized appraisal, acquisition, and relocation strategy as well as check points for STD approval, such as approval of just compensation, replacement housing payment calculations, replacement housing payment and moving cost claims, appraisals, administrative and stipulated settlements that exceed determined thresholds based on a risk management analysis, etc. STD's which have an FHWA approved procedures manual, in accordance with 23 CFR 710.201(c), may comply with this section by requiring the design-builder to execute a certification in its proposal that it has received the approved right-of-way manual and will comply with the procedures.

(ii) The written relocation plan must provide reasonable time frames for the orderly relocation of residents and businesses on the project as provided at 49 CFR 24.205. It should be understood that these time frames will be based on best estimates of the time it will take to acquire the right-of-way and relocate families in accordance with certain legal requirements and time frames which may not be violated. Accordingly, the time frames estimated for right-of-way acquisition will not be compressed in the event other necessary actions preceding right-of-way acquisition miss their assigned due dates.

(2)(i) The design-builder must establish a project tracking system and quality control system. This system must show the appraisal, acquisition and relocation status of all parcels.

(ii) The quality control system may be administered by an independent consultant with the necessary expertise in appraisal, acquisition and relocation policies and procedures, who can make periodic reviews and reports to the design-builder and the STD.

(3) The STD may consider the establishment of a hold off zone around all occupied properties to ensure compliance with right-of-way procedures prior to starting construction activities in affected areas. The limits of this

zone should be established by the STD prior to the design-builder entering on the property. There should be no construction related activity within the hold off zone until the property is vacated. The design-builder must have written notification of vacancy from the right-of-way quality control consultant or STD prior to entering the hold off zone.

(4) Adequate access shall be provided to all occupied properties to insure emergency and personal vehicle access.

(5) Utility service must be available to all occupied properties at all times prior to and until relocation is completed.

(6) Open burning should not occur within 305 meters (1,000 feet) of an occupied dwelling.

(7) The STD will provide a right-of-way project manager who will serve as the first point of contact for all right-of-way issues.

(e) If the STD elects to perform all right-of-way services relating to the design-build contract, the provisions in § 710.311 will apply. The STD will notify potential offerors of the status of all right-of-way issues in the request for proposal document.

[67 FR 75935, Dec. 10, 2002]

Subpart D—Real Property Management

§ 710.401 General.

This subpart describes the acquiring agency's responsibilities to control the use of real property required for a project in which Federal funds participated in any phase of the project. Prior to allowing any change in access control or other use or occupancy of acquired property along the Interstate, the STD shall secure an approval from the FHWA for such change or use. The STD shall specify in the State's ROW operations manual, procedures for the rental, leasing, maintenance, and disposal of real property acquired with title 23 of the United States Code funds. The State shall assure that local agencies follow the State's approved procedures, or the local agencies own procedures if approved for use by the STD.

§ 710.403 Management.

(a) The STD must assure that all real property within the boundaries of a federally-aided facility is devoted exclusively to the purposes of that facility and is preserved free of all other public or private alternative uses, unless such alternative uses are permitted by Federal regulation or the FHWA. An alternative use must be consistent with the continued operation, maintenance, and safety of the facility, and such use shall not result in the exposure of the facility's users or others to hazards.

(b) The STD shall specify procedures in the State manual for determining when a real property interest is no longer needed. These procedures must provide for coordination among relevant STD organizational units, including maintenance, safety, design, planning, right-of-way, environment, access management, and traffic operations.

(c) The STD shall evaluate the environmental effects of disposal and leasing actions requiring FHWA approval as provided in 23 CFR part 771.

(d) Acquiring agencies shall charge current fair market value or rent for the use or disposal of real property interests, including access control, if those real property interests were obtained with title 23 of the United States Code funding, except as provided in paragraphs (d) (1) through (5) of this section. Since property no longer needed for a project was acquired with public funding, the principle guiding disposal would normally be to sell the property at fair market value and use the funds for transportation purposes. The term fair market value as used for acquisition and disposal purposes is as defined by State statute and/or State court decisions. Exceptions to the general requirement for charging fair market value may be approved in the following situations:

(1) With FHWA approval, when the STD clearly shows that an exception is in the overall public interest for social, environmental, or economic purposes; nonproprietary governmental use; or uses under 23 U.S.C. 142(f), Public Transportation. The STD manual may include criteria for evaluating disposals at less than fair market value.

Disposal for public purposes may also be at fair market value. The STD shall submit requests for such exceptions to the FHWA in writing.

(2) Use by public utilities in accordance with 23 CFR part 645.

(3) Use by Railroads in accordance with 23 CFR part 646.

(4) Use for Bikeways and pedestrian walkways in accordance with 23 CFR part 652.

(5) Use for transportation projects eligible for assistance under title 23 of the United States Code, provided that a concession agreement, as defined in section 710.703, shall not constitute a transportation project.

(e) The Federal share of net income from the sale or lease of excess real property shall be used by the STD for activities eligible for funding under title 23 of the United States Code. Where project income derived from the sale or lease of excess property is used for subsequent title 23 projects, use of the income does not create a Federal-aid project.

(f) No FHWA approval is required for disposal of property which is located outside of the limits of the right-of-way if Federal funds did not participate in the acquisition cost of the property.

(g) Highway facilities in which Federal funds participated in either the right-of-way or construction may be relinquished to another governmental agency for continued highway use under the provisions of 23 CFR 620, subpart B.

[64 FR 71290, Dec. 21, 1999, as amended at 73 FR 77503, Dec. 19, 2008]

§ 710.405 Air rights on the Interstate.

(a) The FHWA policies relating to management of airspace on the Interstate for non-highway purposes are included in this section. Although this section deals specifically with approval actions on the Interstate, any use of airspace contemplated by a STD must assure that such occupancy, use, or reservation is in the public interest and does not impair the highway or interfere with the free and safe flow of traffic as provided in 23 CFR 1.23.

(1) This subpart applies to Interstate facilities which received title 23 of the

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United States Code assistance in any way.

(2) This subpart does not apply to the following:

- (i) Non-Interstate highways.
- (ii) Railroads and public utilities which cross or otherwise occupy Federal-aid highway right-of-way.
- (iii) Relocations of railroads or utilities for which reimbursement is claimed under 23 CFR part 140, subparts E and H.
- (iv) Bikeways and pedestrian walkways as covered in 23 CFR part 652.

(b) A STD may grant rights for temporary or permanent occupancy or use of Interstate system airspace if the STD has acquired sufficient legal right, title, and interest in the right-of-way of a federally assisted highway to permit the use of certain airspace for non-highway purposes; and where such airspace is not required presently or in the foreseeable future for the safe and proper operation and maintenance of the highway facility. The STD must obtain prior FHWA approval, except for paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) An STD may make lands and rights-of-way available without charge to a publicly owned mass transit authority for public transit purposes whenever the public interest will be served, and where this can be accomplished without impairing automotive safety or future highway improvements.

(d) An individual, company, organization, or public agency desiring to use airspace shall submit a written request to the STD. If the STD recommends approval, it shall forward an application together with its recommendation and any necessary supplemental information including the proposed airspace agreement to the FHWA. The submission shall affirmatively provide for adherence to all policy requirements contained in this subpart and conform to the provisions in the FHWA's Airspace Guidelines at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/index.htm>.

§ 710.407 Leasing.

(a) Leasing of real property acquired with title 23 of the United States Code, funds shall be covered by an agreement between the STD and lessee which contains provisions to insure the safety and integrity of the federally funded

facility. It shall also include provisions governing lease revocation, removal of improvements at no cost to the FHWA, adequate insurance to hold the State and the FHWA harmless, non-discrimination, access by the STD and the FHWA for inspection, maintenance, and reconstruction of the facility.

(b) Where a proposed use requires changes in the existing transportation facility, such changes shall be provided without cost to Federal funds unless otherwise specifically agreed to by the STD and the FHWA.

(c) Proposed uses of real property shall conform to the current design standards and safety criteria of the Federal Highway Administration for the functional classification of the highway facility in which the property is located.

§ 710.409 Disposals.

(a) Real property interests determined to be excess to transportation needs may be sold or conveyed to a public entity or to a private party in accordance with § 710.403(d).

(b) Federal, State, and local agencies shall be afforded the opportunity to acquire real property interests considered for disposal when such real property interests have potential use for parks, conservation, recreation, or related purposes, and when such a transfer is allowed by State law. When this potential exists, the STD shall notify the appropriate resource agencies of its intentions to dispose of the real property interests. The notifications can be accomplished by placing the appropriate agencies on the States' disposal notification listing.

(c) Real property interests may be retained by the STD to restore, preserve, or improve the scenic beauty and environmental quality adjacent to the transportation facility.

(d) Where the transfer of properties to other agencies at less than fair market value for continued public use is clearly justified as in the public interest and approved by the FHWA, the deed shall provide for reversion of the property for failure to continue public ownership and use. Where property is sold at fair market value no reversion clause is required. Disposal actions described in 23 CFR 710.403(d)(1) for less

than fair market value require a public interest determination and FHWA approval, consistent with that section.

[64 FR 71290, Dec. 21, 1999, as amended at 67 FR 12863, Mar. 20, 2002]

Subpart E—Property Acquisition Alternatives

§ 710.501 Early acquisition.

(a) *Real property acquisition.* The State may initiate acquisition of real property at any time it has the legal authority to do so based on program or project considerations. The State may undertake early acquisition for corridor preservation, access management, or other purposes.

(b) *Eligible costs.* Acquisition costs incurred by a State agency prior to executing a project agreement with the FHWA are not eligible for Federal-aid reimbursement. However, such costs may become eligible for use as a credit towards the State's share of a Federal-aid project if the following conditions are met:

- (1) The property was lawfully obtained by the State;
- (2) The property was not land described in 23 U.S.C. 138;
- (3) The property was acquired in accordance with the provisions of 49 CFR part 24;
- (4) The State complied with the requirements of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d–2000d–4);
- (5) The State determined and the FHWA concurs that the action taken did not influence the environmental assessment for the project, including:
 - (i) The decision on need to construct the project;
 - (ii) The consideration of alternatives; and
 - (iii) The selection of the design or location; and
- (6) The property will be incorporated into a Federal-aid project.
- (7) The original project agreement covering the project was executed on or after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Reimbursement.* In addition to meeting all provisions in paragraph (b) of this section, the FHWA approval for reimbursement for early acquisition costs, including costs associated with

displacement of owners or tenants, requires the STD to demonstrate that:

(1) Prior to acquisition, the STD made the certifications and determinations required by 23 U.S.C. 108(c)(2)(C) and (D); and

(2) The STD obtained concurrence from the Environmental Protection Agency in the findings made under paragraph (b)(5) of this section regarding the NEPA process.

§ 710.503 Protective buying and hardship acquisition.

(a) *General conditions.* Prior to the STD obtaining final environmental approval, the STD may request FHWA agreement to provide reimbursement for advance acquisition of a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels, to prevent imminent development and increased costs on the preferred location (Protective Buying), or to alleviate hardship to a property owner or owners on the preferred location (Hardship Acquisition), provided the following conditions are met:

- (1) The project is included in the currently approved STIP;
- (2) The STD has complied with applicable public involvement requirements in 23 CFR parts 450 and 771;
- (3) A determination has been completed for any property subject to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 138; and
- (4) Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are completed for properties subject to 16 U.S.C. 470(f) (historic properties).

(b) *Protective buying.* The STD must clearly demonstrate that development of the property is imminent and such development would limit future transportation choices. A significant increase in cost may be considered as an element justifying a protective purchase.

(c) *Hardship acquisitions.* The STD must accept and concur in a request for a hardship acquisition based on a property owner's written submission that:

- (1) Supports the hardship acquisition by providing justification, on the basis of health, safety or financial reasons, that remaining in the property poses an undue hardship compared to others; and
- (2) Documents an inability to sell the property because of the impending

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project, at fair market value, within a time period that is typical for properties not impacted by the impending project.

(d) *Environmental decisions.* Acquisition of property under this section shall not influence the environmental assessment of a project, including the decision relative to the need to construct the project or the selection of a specific location.

§ 710.505 Real property donations.

(a) *Donations of property being acquired.* A non-governmental owner whose real property is required for a Federal-aid project may donate the property to the STD. Prior to accepting the property, the owner must be informed by the agency of his/her right to receive just compensation for the property. The owner shall also be informed of his/her right to an appraisal of the property by a qualified appraiser, unless the STD determines that an appraisal is unnecessary because the valuation problem is uncomplicated and the fair market value is estimated at no more than \$2500, or the State appraisal waiver limit approved by the FHWA, whichever is greater. All donations of property received prior to the approval of the NEPA document must meet environmental requirements as specified in 23 U.S.C. 323(d).

(b) *Credit for donations.* Donations of real property may be credited to the State's matching share of the project. Credit to the State's matching share for donated property shall be based on fair market value established on the earlier of the following: either the date on which the donation becomes effective, or the date on which equitable title to the property vests in the State. The fair market value shall not include increases or decreases in value caused by the project. Donations may be made at anytime during the development of a project. The STD shall develop sufficient documentation to indicate compliance with paragraph (a) of this section and to support the amount of credit applied. The total credit cannot exceed the State's pro-rata share under the project agreement to which it is applied.

(c) *Donations and conveyances in exchange for construction features or serv-*

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ices. A property owner may donate property in exchange for construction features or services. The value of the donation is limited to the fair market value of property donated less the cost of the construction features or services. If the value of the donated property exceeds the cost of the construction features or services, the difference may be eligible for a credit to the State's share of project costs.

§ 710.507 State and local contributions.

(a) *General.* Real property owned by State and local governments incorporated within a federally funded project can be used as a credit toward the State matching share of total project cost. A credit cannot exceed the State's matching share required by the project agreement.

(b) *Effective date.* Credits can be applied to projects where the initial project agreement is executed after June 9, 1998.

(c) *Exemptions.* Credits are not available for lands acquired with any form of Federal financial assistance, or for lands already incorporated and used for transportation purposes.

(d) *State contributions.* Real property acquired with State funds and required for federally-assisted projects may support a credit toward the non-Federal share of project costs. The STD must prepare documentation supporting all credits including:

(1) A certification that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR 710.501(b); and

(2) Justification of the value of credit applied. Acquisition costs incurred by the State to acquire title can be used as justification for the value of the real property.

(e) *Credit for local government contributions.* A contribution by a unit of local government of real property which is offered for credit, in connection with a project eligible for assistance under this title, shall be credited against the State share of the project at fair market value of the real property. Property may also be presented for project use with the understanding that no credit for its use is sought. The STD shall assure that the acquisition satisfied the conditions in 23 CFR

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710.501(b), and that documentation justifies the amount of the credit.

§710.509 Functional replacement of real property in public ownership.

(a) *General.* When publicly owned real property, including land and/or facilities, is to be acquired for a Federal-aid highway project, in lieu of paying the fair market value for the real property, the State may provide compensation by functionally replacing the publicly owned real property with another facility which will provide equivalent utility.

(b) *Federal participation.* Federal-aid funds may participate in functional replacement costs only if:

(1) Functional replacement is permitted under State law and the STD elects to provide it.

(2) The property in question is in public ownership and use.

(3) The replacement facility will be in public ownership and will continue the public use function of the acquired facility.

(4) The State has informed the agency owning the property of its right to an estimate of just compensation based on an appraisal of fair market value and of the option to choose either just compensation or functional replacement.

(5) The FHWA concurs in the STD determination that functional replacement is in the public interest.

(6) The real property is not owned by a utility or railroad.

(c) *Federal land transfers.* Use of this section for functional replacement of real property in Federal ownership shall be in accordance with Federal land transfer provisions in subpart F of this part.

(d) *Limits upon participation.* Federal-aid participation in the costs of functional replacement are limited to costs which are actually incurred in the replacement of the acquired land and/or facility and are:

(1) Costs for facilities which do not represent increases in capacity or betterments, except for those necessary to replace utilities, to meet legal, regulatory, or similar requirements, or to meet reasonable prevailing standards; and

(2) Costs for land to provide a site for the replacement facility.

(e) *Procedures.* When a State determines that payments providing for functional replacement of public facilities are allowable under State law, the State will incorporate within the State's ROW operating manual full procedures covering review and oversight that will be applied to such cases.

§710.511 Transportation enhancements.

(a) *General.* Section 133(b) (8) of title 23 of the United States Code authorizes the expenditure of surface transportation funds for transportation enhancement activities (TEA). Transportation enhancement activities which involve the acquisition, management, and disposition of real property, and the relocation of families, individuals, and businesses, are governed by the general requirements of the Federal-aid program found in titles 23 and 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), except as specified in paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(b) *Requirements.* (1) Displacements for TEA are subject to the Uniform Act.

(2) Acquisitions for TEA are subject to the Uniform Act except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3), (b)(4), and (b)(5) of this section.

(3) Entities acquiring real property for TEA who lack the power of eminent domain may comply with the Uniform Act by meeting the limited requirements under 49 CFR 24.101(a)(2).

(4) The requirements of the Uniform Act do not apply when real property acquired for a TEA was purchased from a third party by a qualified conservation organization, and—

(i) The conservation organization is not acting on behalf of the agency receiving TEA or other Federal-aid funds, and

(ii) There was no Federal approval of property acquisition prior to the involvement of the conservation organization. [“Federal approval of property acquisition” means the date of the approval of the environmental document or project authorization/agreement, whichever is earlier. “Involvement of the conservation organization” means

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the date the organization makes a legally binding offer to acquire a real property interest, including an option to purchase, in the property.]

(5) When a qualified conservation organization acquires real property for a project receiving Federal-aid highway funds on behalf of an agency with eminent domain authority, the requirements of the Uniform Act apply as if the agency had acquired the property itself.

(6) When, subsequent to Federal approval of property acquisition, a qualified conservation organization acquires real property for a project receiving Federal-aid highway funds, and there will be no use or recourse to the power of eminent domain, the limited requirements of 49 CFR 24.101(a)(2) apply.

(c) *Property management.* Real property acquired with TEA funds shall be managed in accordance with the property management requirements provided in subpart D of this part. Any use of the property for purposes other than that for which the TEA funds were provided must be consistent with the continuation of the original use. When the original use of the real property is converted by sale or lease to another use inconsistent with the original use, the STD shall assure that the fair market value or rent is charged and the proceeds reapplied to projects eligible under title 23 of the United States Code.

§710.513 Environmental mitigation.

(a) The acquisition and maintenance of land for wetlands mitigation, wetlands banking, natural habitat, or other appropriate environmental mitigation is an eligible cost under the Federal-aid program. FHWA participation in wetland mitigation sites and other mitigation banks is governed by 23 CFR part 777.

(b) Environmental acquisitions or displacements by both public agencies and private parties are covered by the Uniform Act when they are the result of a program or project undertaken by a Federal agency or one that receives Federal financial assistance. This includes real property acquired for a wetland bank, or other environmentally related purpose, if it is to be used to

mitigate impacts created by a Federal-aid highway project.

Subpart F—Federal Assistance Programs

§710.601 Federal land transfer.

(a) The provisions of this subpart apply to any project undertaken with funds for the National Highway System. When the FHWA determines that a strong Federal transportation interest exists, these provisions may also be applied to highway projects that are eligible for Federal-aid under Chapters 1 and 2 of title 23, of the United States Code, and to highway-related transfers that are requested by a State in conjunction with a military base closure under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510, 104 Stat. 1808, as amended).

(b) Sections 107(d) and 317 of title 23, of the United States Code provide for the transfer of lands or interests in lands owned by the United States to an STD or its nominee for highway purposes.

(c) The STD may file an application with the FHWA, or can make application directly to the land-owning agency if the land-owning agency has its own authority for granting interests in land.

(d) Applications under this section shall include the following information:

(1) The purpose for which the lands are to be used;

(2) The estate or interest in the land required for the project;

(3) The Federal-aid project number or other appropriate references;

(4) The name of the Federal agency exercising jurisdiction over the land and identity of the installation or activity in possession of the land;

(5) A map showing the survey of the lands to be acquired;

(6) A legal description of the lands desired; and

(7) A statement of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332, *et seq.*) and any other applicable Federal environmental laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470(f)), and 23 U.S.C. 138.

(e) If the FHWA concurs in the need for the transfer, the land-owning agency will be notified and a right-of-entry requested. The land-owning agency shall have a period of four months in which to designate conditions necessary for the adequate protection and utilization of the reserve or to certify that the proposed appropriation is contrary to the public interest or inconsistent with the purposes for which such land or materials have been reserved. The FHWA may extend the four-month reply period at the timely request of the land-owning agency for good cause.

(f) Deeds for conveyance of lands or interests in lands owned by the United States shall be prepared by the STD and certified by an attorney licensed within the State as being legally sufficient. Such deeds shall contain the clauses required by the FHWA and 49 CFR 21.7(a)(2). After the STD prepares the deed, it will submit the proposed deed with the certification to the FHWA for review and execution.

(g) Following execution, the STD shall record the deed in the appropriate land record office and so advise the FHWA and the concerned agency.

(h) When the need for the interest acquired under this subpart no longer exists, the STD must restore the land to the condition which existed prior to the transfer and must give notice to the FHWA and to the concerned Federal agency that such interest will immediately revert to the control of the Federal agency from which it was appropriated or to its assigns. Alternative arrangements may be made for the sale or reversion or restoration of the lands no longer required as part of a memorandum of understanding or separate agreement.

§ 710.603 Direct Federal acquisition.

(a) The provisions of this section apply to any land and or improvements needed in connection with any project on the Interstate System, defense access roads, public lands highways, park roads, parkways, Indian reservation roads, and projects performed by the FHWA in cooperation with Federal and State agencies. For projects on the Interstate System and defense access roads, the provisions of this part are

applicable only where the State is unable to acquire the required right-of-way or is unable to obtain possession with sufficient promptness.

(b) To enable the FHWA to make the necessary finding to proceed with the acquisition of the rights-of-way, the STDs written application for Federal acquisition shall include:

(1) Justification for the Federal acquisition of the lands or interests in lands;

(2) The date the FHWA authorized the STD to commence right-of-way acquisition, the date of the project agreement and a statement that the agreement contains the provisions required by 25 U.S.C. 111;

(3) The necessity for acquisition of the particular lands under request;

(4) A statement of the specific interests in lands to be acquired, including the proposed treatment of control of access;

(5) The STDs intentions with respect to the acquisition, subordination, or exclusion of outstanding interests, such as minerals and utility easements, in connection with the proposed acquisition;

(6) A statement on compliance with the provisions of part 771 of this chapter;

(7) Adequate legal descriptions, plats, appraisals, and title data;

(8) An outline of the negotiations which have been conducted by the STD with landowners;

(9) An agreement that the STD will pay its pro rata share of costs incurred in the acquisition of, or the attempt to acquire rights-of-way; and

(10) A statement that assures compliance with the applicable provisions of the Uniform Act. (42 U.S.C. 4601, *et seq.*)

(c) If the landowner tenders a right-of-entry or other right of possession document required by State law any time before the FHWA makes a determination that the STD is unable to acquire the rights-of-way with sufficient promptness, the STD is legally obligated to accept such tender and the FHWA may not proceed with Federal acquisition.

(d) If the STD obtains title to a parcel prior to the filing of the Declaration of Taking, it shall notify the

FHWA and immediately furnish the appropriate U.S. Attorney with a disclaimer together with a request that the action against the landowner be dismissed (ex parte) from the proceeding and the estimated just compensation deposited into the registry of the court for the affected parcel be withdrawn after the appropriate motions are approved by the court.

(e) When the United States obtains a court order granting possession of the real property, the FHWA shall authorize the STD to take over supervision of the property. The authorization shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) The right to take possession of unoccupied properties;

(2) The right to give 90 days notice to owners to vacate occupied properties and the right to take possession of such properties when vacated;

(3) The right to permit continued occupancy of a property until it is required for construction and, in those instances where such occupancy is to be for a substantial period of time, the right to enter into rental agreements, as appropriate, to protect the public interest;

(4) The right to request assistance from the U.S. Attorney in obtaining physical possession where an owner declines to comply with the court order of possession;

(5) The right to clear improvements and other obstructions;

(6) Instructions that the U.S. Attorney be notified prior to actual clearing, so as to afford him an opportunity to view the lands and improvements, to obtain appropriate photographs, and to secure appraisals in connection with the preparation of the case for trial;

(7) The requirement for appropriate credits to the United States for any net salvage or net rentals obtained by the State, as in the case of right-of-way acquired by the State for Federal-aid projects; and

(8) Instructions that the authority granted to the STD is not intended to preclude the U.S. Attorney from taking action, before the STD has made arrangements for removal, to reach a settlement with the former owner which would include provision for removal.

(f) If the Federal Government initiates condemnation proceedings against the owner of real property in a Federal court and the final judgment is that the Federal agency cannot acquire the real property by condemnation, or the proceeding is abandoned, the court is required by law to award such a sum to the owner of the real property that in the opinion of the court provides reimbursement for the owner's reasonable costs, disbursements, and expenses, including reasonable attorney, appraisal, and engineering fees, actually incurred because of the condemnation proceedings.

(g) As soon as practicable after the date of payment of the purchase price or the date of deposit in court of funds to satisfy the award of the compensation in a Federal condemnation, the FHWA shall reimburse the owner to the extent deemed fair and reasonable, the following costs:

(1) Recording fees, transfer taxes, and similar expenses incidental to conveying such real property to the United States;

(2) Penalty costs for prepayment of any preexisting recorded mortgage entered into in good faith encumbering such real property; and

(3) The pro rata portion of real property taxes paid which are allocable to a period subsequent to the date of vesting title in the United States or the effective date of possession, whichever is the earlier.

(h) The lands or interests in lands, acquired under this section, will be conveyed to the State or the appropriate political subdivision thereof, upon agreement by the STD, or said subdivision to:

(1) Maintain control of access where applicable;

(2) Accept title thereto;

(3) Maintain the project constructed thereon;

(4) Abide by any conditions which may set forth in the deed; and

(5) Notify the FHWA at the appropriate time that all the conditions have been performed by the State.

(i) The deed from the United States to the State, or to the appropriate political subdivision thereof, shall include the conditions required by 49 CFR part 21. The deed shall be recorded

by the grantee in the appropriate land record office, and the FHWA shall be advised of the recording date.

Subpart G—Concession Agreements

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 156 and 315; 23 CFR 1.32; 49 CFR 1.48.

SOURCE: 73 FR 77503, Dec. 19, 2008, unless otherwise noted.

§ 710.701 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to prescribe the standards that ensure fair market value is received by a highway agency under concession agreements involving federally funded highways.

§ 710.703 Definitions.

As used in this subpart:

(a) *Best value* means the proposal of offering the most overall public benefits as determined through an evaluation of the amount of the concession payment and other appropriate considerations. Such other appropriate considerations may include, but are not limited to, qualifications and experience of the concessionaire, expected quality of services to be provided, the history or track record of the concessionaire in providing the services, timelines for the delivery of services, performance standards, complexity of the services to be rendered, and revenue sharing. Such appropriate considerations may also include, but are not limited to, policy considerations that are important, but not quantifiable, such as retaining the ability to amend the concession agreement if conditions change, having a desired level of oversight over the facility, ensuring a certain level of maintenance and operations for the facility, considerations relative to the structure and amount of the toll rates, economic development impacts and considerations, or social and environmental benefits and impacts.

(b) *Concession agreement* means an agreement between a highway agency and a concessionaire under which the concessionaire is given the right to operate and collect revenues or fees for the use of a federally funded highway in return for compensation to be paid

to the highway agency. A concession agreement may include, but not be limited to, obligations concerning the development, design, construction, maintenance, operation, level of service, and/or capital improvements to a facility over the term of the agreement. Concession agreement shall not include agreements between government entities, even when compensation is paid, where the primary purpose of the transaction is not commercial in nature but for the purpose of determining governmental ownership, control, jurisdiction, or responsibilities with respect to the operation of a federally funded highway. The highway agency's determination as to whether an agreement between government entities constitutes a concession agreement shall be controlling.

(c) *Concessionaire* means any private or public entity that enters into a concession agreement with a highway agency.

(d) *Fair market value* means the price at which a highway agency and concessionaire are ready and willing to enter into a concession agreement for a federally funded highway on, or as if in, the open market for a reasonable period of time and in an arm's length transaction to any willing, knowledgeable, and able buyer. For purposes of this subpart, a concession agreement based on best value shall be deemed fair market value.

(e) *Federally funded highway* means any highway (including highways, bridges, and tunnels) acquired with Federal assistance made available from the Highway Trust Fund (other than the Mass Transit Account). A highway shall be deemed to be acquired with Federal assistance if Federal assistance participated in either the purchase of any real property, or in any capital expenditures in any fixtures located on real property, within the right-of-way, including the highway and any structures located upon the property.

(f) *Highway agency* means any State transportation department or other public authority with jurisdiction over a federally funded highway.

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§ 710.705 Applicability.

This subpart applies to all concession agreements involving federally funded highways that are executed after January 18, 2009.

§ 710.707 Fair market value.

A highway agency shall receive fair market value for any concession agreement involving a federally funded highway.

§ 710.709 Determination of fair market value.

(a) Fair market value may be determined either on a best value basis, highest net present value of the payments to be received over the life of the agreement, or highest bid received, as may be specified by the highway agency in the request for proposals or other relevant solicitation. If best value is used, the highway agency should identify, in the relevant solicitation, the criteria to be used as well as the weight afforded to the criteria.

(b) In order to be considered fair market value, the terms of the concession agreement must be both legally binding and enforceable.

(c) Any concession agreement awarded pursuant to a competitive process with more than one bidder shall be deemed to be fair market value. Any concession agreement awarded pursuant to a competitive process with only one bidder shall be presumed to be fair market value. Such presumption may be overcome only if the highway agency determines the proposal to not be fair market value based on the highway agency's estimates. Nothing in this subpart shall be construed to require a highway agency to accept any proposal, even if the proposal is deemed fair market value. For purposes of this subsection, a competitive process shall afford all interested proposers an equal opportunity to submit a proposal for the concession agreement and shall comply with applicable State and local law.

(d) If a concession agreement is not awarded pursuant to a competitive process, the highway agency must receive fair market value, as determined by the highway agency in accordance with State law, so long as an inde-

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pendent third party assessment is conducted and made publicly available.

(e) Nothing in this subpart is intended to waive the requirements of part 172, part 635, and part 636 whenever any Federal-aid (including TIFIA assistance) is to be used for a project under the concession agreement.

PART 750—HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION

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Subpart G—Outdoor Advertising Control

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SOURCE: 38 FR 16044, June 20, 1973, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—National Standards for Regulation by States of Outdoor Advertising Adjacent to the Interstate System Under the 1958 Bonus Program

AUTHORITY: Sec. 12, Pub. L. 85-381, 72 Stat. 95, as amended; 23 U.S.C. 131; delegation of authority in 49 CFR 1.48(b).

§ 750.101 Purpose.

(a) In section 12 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1958, Pub. L. 85-381, 72 Stat. 95, hereinafter called the *act*, the Congress declared that:

(1) To promote the safety, convenience, and enjoyment of public travel and the free flow of interstate commerce and to protect the public investment in the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, hereinafter called the *Interstate System*, it is in the public interest to encourage and assist the States to control the use of and to improve areas adjacent to such system by controlling the erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays, and devices adjacent to that system.

(2) It is a national policy that the erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays, or devices within 660 feet of the edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of all portions of the Interstate System constructed upon any part of right-of-way, the entire width of which is acquired subsequent to July

1, 1956, should be regulated, consistent with national standards to be prepared and promulgated by the Secretary of Transportation.

(b) The standards in this part are hereby promulgated as provided in the act.

[38 FR 16044, June 20, 1973, as amended at 39 FR 28629, Aug. 9, 1974]

§ 750.102 Definitions.

The following terms when used in the standards in this part have the following meanings:

(a) *Acquired for right-of-way* means acquired for right-of-way for any public road by the Federal Government, a State, or a county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, by donation, dedication, purchase, condemnation, use, or otherwise. The date of acquisition shall be the date upon which title (whether fee title or a lesser interest) vested in the public for right-of-way purposes under applicable Federal or State law.

(b) *Centerline of the highway* means a line equidistant from the edges of the median separating the main-traveled ways of a divided Interstate Highway, or the centerline of the main-traveled way of a nondivided Interstate Highway.

(c) *Controlled portion of the Interstate System* means any portion which:

(1) Is constructed upon any part of right-of-way, the entire width of which is acquired for right-of-way subsequent to July 1, 1956 (a portion shall be deemed so constructed if, within such portion, no line normal or perpendicular to the centerline of the highway and extending to both edges of the right-of-way will intersect any right-of-way acquired for right-of-way on or before July 1, 1956);

(2) Lies within a State, the highway department of which has entered into an agreement with the Secretary of Transportation as provided in the act; and

(3) Is not excluded under the terms of the act which provide that agreements entered into between the Secretary of Transportation and the State highway department shall not apply to those segments of the Interstate System

which traverse commercial or industrial zones within the boundaries of incorporated municipalities, as such boundaries existed on September 21, 1959, wherein the use of real property adjacent to the Interstate System is subject to municipal regulation or control, or which traverse other areas where the land use as of September 21, 1959, was clearly established by State law as industrial or commercial.

(d) *Entrance roadway* means any public road or turning roadway, including acceleration lanes, by which traffic may enter the main-traveled way of an Interstate Highway from the general road system within a State, irrespective of whether traffic may also leave the main-traveled way by such road or turning roadway.

(e) *Erect* means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.

(f) *Exit roadway* means any public road or turning roadway including deceleration lanes, by which traffic may leave the main-traveled way of an Interstate Highway to reach the general road system within a State, irrespective of whether traffic may also enter the main-traveled way by such road or turning roadway.

(g) *Informational site* means an area or site established and maintained within or adjacent to the right-of-way of a highway on the Interstate System by or under the supervision or control of a State highway department, wherein panels for the display of advertising and informational signs may be erected and maintained.

(h) *Legible* means capable of being read without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.

(i) *Maintain* means to allow to exist.

(j) *Main-traveled way* means the traveled way of an Interstate Highway on which through traffic is carried. In the case of a divided highway, the traveled way of each of the separated roadways for traffic in opposite directions is a main-traveled way. It does not include such facilities as frontage roads, turning roadways, or parking areas.

(k) *Protected areas* means all areas inside the boundaries of a State which are adjacent to and within 660 feet of the edge of the right-of-way of all con-

trolled portions of the Interstate System within that State. Where a controlled portion of the Interstate System terminates at a State boundary which is not perpendicular or normal to the centerline of the highway, protected areas also means all areas inside the boundary of such State which are within 660 feet of the edge of the right-of-way of the Interstate Highway in the adjoining State.

(l) *Scenic area* means any public park or area of particular scenic beauty or historical significance designated by or pursuant to State law as a scenic area.

(m) *Sign* means any outdoor sign, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing which is designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform, any part of the advertising or informative contents of which is visible from any place on the main-traveled way of a controlled portion of the Interstate System.

(n) *State* means the District of Columbia and any State of the United States within the boundaries of which a portion of the Interstate System is located.

(o) *State law* means a State constitutional provision or statute, or an ordinance, rule, or regulation enacted or adopted by a State agency or political subdivision of a State pursuant to State constitution or statute.

(p) *Trade name* shall include brand name, trademark, distinctive symbol, or other similar device or thing used to identify particular products or services.

(q) *Traveled way* means the portion of a roadway for the movement of vehicles, exclusive of shoulders.

(r) *Turning roadway* means a connecting roadway for traffic turning between two intersection legs of an interchange.

(s) *Visible* means capable of being seen (whether or not legible) without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.

§ 750.103 Measurements of distance.

(a) Distance from the edge of a right-of-way shall be measured horizontally along a line normal or perpendicular to the centerline of the highway.

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(b) All distances under § 750.107 (a)(2) and (b) shall be measured along the centerline of the highway between two vertical planes which are normal or perpendicular to and intersect the centerline of the highway, and which pass through the termini of the measured distance.

[38 FR 16044, June 20, 1973, as amended at 41 FR 9321, Mar. 4, 1976]

§ 750.104 Signs that may not be permitted in protected areas.

Erection or maintenance of the following signs may not be permitted in protected areas:

(a) Signs advertising activities that are illegal under State or Federal laws or regulations in effect at the location of such signs or at the location of such activities.

(b) Obsolete signs.

(c) Signs that are not clean and in good repair.

(d) Signs that are not securely affixed to a substantial structure, and

(e) Signs that are not consistent with the standards in this part.

§ 750.105 Signs that may be permitted in protected areas.

(a) Erection or maintenance of the following signs may be permitted in protected areas:

Class 1—Official signs. Directional or other official signs or notices erected and maintained by public officers or agencies pursuant to and in accordance with direction or authorization contained in State or Federal law, for the purpose of carrying out an official duty or responsibility.

Class 2—On-premise signs. Signs not prohibited by State law which are consistent with the applicable provisions of this section and § 750.108 and which advertise the sale or lease of, or activities being conducted upon, the real property where the signs are located.

Not more than one such sign advertising the sale or lease of the same property may be permitted under this class in such manner as to be visible to traffic proceeding in any one direction on any one Interstate Highway.

Not more than one such sign, visible to traffic proceeding in any one direction on any one Interstate Highway and advertising activities being conducted upon the real property where the sign is located, may be permitted under this class more than 50 feet from the advertised activity.

Class 3—Signs within 12 miles of advertised activities. Signs not prohibited by State law which are consistent with the applicable provisions of this section and §§ 750.106, 750.107, and 750.108 and which advertise activities being conducted within 12 air miles of such signs.

Class 4—Signs in the specific interest of the traveling public. Signs authorized to be erected or maintained by State law which are consistent with the applicable provisions of this section and §§ 750.106, 750.107, and 750.108 and which are designed to give information in the specific interest of the traveling public.

(b) A Class 2 or 3 sign, except a Class 2 sign not more than 50 feet from the advertised activity, that displays any trade name which refers to or identifies any service rendered or product sold, used, or otherwise handled more than 12 air miles from such sign may not be permitted unless the name of the advertised activity which is within 12 air miles of such sign is displayed as conspicuously as such trade name.

(c) Only information about public places operated by Federal, State, or local governments, natural phenomena, historic sites, areas of natural scenic beauty or naturally suited for outdoor recreation and places for camping, lodging, eating, and vehicle service and repair is deemed to be in the specific interest of the traveling public. For the purposes of the standards in this part, a trade name is deemed to be information in the specific interest of the traveling public only if it identifies or characterizes such a place or identifies vehicle service, equipment, parts, accessories, fuels, oils, or lubricants being offered for sale at such a place. Signs displaying any other trade name may not be permitted under Class 4.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, Class 2 or Class 3 signs which also qualify as Class 4 signs may display trade names in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, Class 2 or Class 3 signs which also qualify as Class 4 signs may display trade names in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (c) of this section.

§ 750.106 Class 3 and 4 signs within informational sites.

(a) Informational sites for the erection and maintenance of Class 3 and 4 advertising and informational signs may be established in accordance with § 1.35 of this chapter. The location and frequency of such sites shall be as determined by agreements between the Secretary of Transportation and the State highway departments.

(b) Class 3 and 4 signs may be permitted within such informational sites in protected areas in a manner consistent with the following provisions:

(1) No sign may be permitted which is not placed upon a panel.

(2) No panel may be permitted to exceed 13 feet in height or 25 feet in length, including border and trim, but excluding supports.

(3) No sign may be permitted to exceed 12 square feet in area, and nothing on such sign may be permitted to be legible from any place on the main-traveled way or a turning roadway.

(4) Not more than one sign concerning a single activity or place may be permitted within any one informational site.

(5) Signs concerning a single activity or place may be permitted within more than one informational site, but no Class 3 sign which does not also qualify as a Class 4 sign may be permitted within any informational site more than 12 air miles from the advertised activity.

(6) No sign may be permitted which moves or has any animated or moving parts.

(7) Illumination of panels by other than white lights may not be permitted, and no sign placed on any panel may be permitted to contain, include, or be illuminated by any other lights, or any flashing, intermittent, or moving lights.

(8) No lighting may be permitted to be used in any way in connection with any panel unless it is so effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the main-traveled way of the Interstate System, or is of such low intensity or brilliance as not to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or to otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle.

[23 FR 8793, Nov. 13, 1958, as amended at 35 FR 18719, Dec. 10, 1970; 41 FR 9321, Mar. 4, 1976]

§ 750.107 Class 3 and 4 signs outside informational sites.

(a) The erection or maintenance of the following signs may be permitted within protected areas, outside informational sites:

(1) Class 3 signs which are visible only to Interstate highway traffic not served by an informational site within 12 air miles of the advertised activity;

(2) Class 4 signs which are more than 12 miles from the nearest panel within an informational site serving Interstate highway traffic to which such signs are visible.

(3) Signs that qualify both as Class 3 and 4 signs may be permitted in accordance with either paragraph (a)(1) or (2) of this section.

(b) The erection or maintenance of signs permitted under paragraph (a) of this section may not be permitted in any manner inconsistent with the following:

(1) In protected areas in advance of an intersection of the main-traveled way of an Interstate highway and an exit roadway, such signs visible to Interstate highway traffic approaching such intersection may not be permitted to exceed the following number:

Distance from intersection	Number of signs
0–2 miles	0.
2–5 miles	6.
More than 5 miles	Average of one sign per mile.

The specified distances shall be measured to the nearest point of the intersection of the traveled way of the exit roadway and the main-traveled way of the Interstate highway.

(2) Subject to the other provisions of this paragraph, not more than two such signs may be permitted within any mile distance measured from any point, and no such signs may be permitted to be less than 1,000 feet apart.

(3) Such signs may not be permitted in protected areas adjacent to any Interstate highway right-of-way upon any part of the width of which is constructed an entrance or exit roadway.

(4) Such signs visible to Interstate highway traffic which is approaching or has passed an entrance roadway may not be permitted in protected areas for 1,000 feet beyond the furthest point of the intersection between the traveled way of such entrance roadway and the main-traveled way of the Interstate highway.

(5) No such signs may be permitted in scenic areas.

(6) Not more than one such sign advertising activities being conducted as

a single enterprise or giving information about a single place may be permitted to be erected or maintained in such manner as to be visible to traffic moving in any one direction on any one Interstate highway.

(c) No Class 3 or 4 signs other than those permitted by this section may be permitted to be erected or maintained within protected areas, outside informational sites.

§ 750.108 General provisions.

No Class 3 or 4 signs may be permitted to be erected or maintained pursuant to § 750.107, and no Class 2 sign may be permitted to be erected or maintained, in any manner inconsistent with the following:

(a) No sign may be permitted which attempts or appears to attempt to direct the movement of traffic or which interferes with, imitates or resembles any official traffic sign, signal or device.

(b) No sign may be permitted which prevents the driver of a vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view of official signs and approaching or merging traffic.

(c) No sign may be permitted which contains, includes, or is illuminated by any flashing, intermittent or moving light or lights.

(d) No lighting may be permitted to be used in any way in connection with any sign unless it is so effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the main-traveled way of the Interstate System, or is of such low intensity or brilliance as not to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or to otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle.

(e) No sign may be permitted which moves or has any animated or moving parts.

(f) No sign may be permitted to be erected or maintained upon trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features.

(g) No sign may be permitted to exceed 20 feet in length, width or height, or 150 square feet in area, including border and trim but excluding supports, except Class 2 signs not more than 50 feet from, and advertising ac-

tivities being conducted upon, the real property where the sign is located.

§ 750.109 Exclusions.

The standards in this part shall not apply to markers, signs and plaques in appreciation of sites of historical significance for the erection of which provisions are made in an agreement between a State and the Secretary of Transportation, as provided in the Act, unless such agreement expressly makes all or any part of the standards applicable.

§ 750.110 State regulations.

A State may elect to prohibit signs permissible under the standards in this part without forfeiting its rights to any benefits provided for in the act.

Subpart B—National Standards for Directional and Official Signs

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 131, 315, 49 U.S.C. 1651; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

§ 750.151 Purpose.

(a) In section 131 of title 23 U.S.C., Congress has declared that:

(1) The erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays, and devices in areas adjacent to the Interstate System and the primary system should be controlled in order to protect the public investment in such highways, to promote safety and recreational value of public travel, and to preserve natural beauty.

(2) Directional and official signs and notices, which signs and notices shall include, but not be limited to, signs and notices pertaining to natural wonders, scenic and historical attractions, which are required or authorized by law, shall conform to national standards authorized to be promulgated by the Secretary, which standards shall contain provisions concerning the lighting, size, number and spacing of signs, and such other requirements as may be appropriate to implement the section.

(b) The standards in this part are issued as provided in section 131 of title 23 U.S.C.

[38 FR 16044, June 30, 1973, as amended at 40 FR 21934, May 20, 1975]

§ 750.152 Application.

The following standards apply to directional and official signs and notices located within six hundred and sixty (660) feet of the right-of-way of the Interstate and Federal-aid primary systems and to those located beyond six hundred and sixty (660) feet of the right-of-way of such systems, outside of urban areas, visible from the main traveled way of such systems and erected with the purpose of their message being read from such main traveled way. These standards do not apply to directional and official signs erected on the highway right-of-way.

[40 FR 21934, May 20, 1975]

§ 750.153 Definitions.

For the purpose of this part:

(a) *Sign* means an outdoor sign, light, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing which is designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform, any part of the advertising or informative contents of which is visible from any place on the main traveled way of the Interstate or Federal-aid primary highway.

(b) *Main traveled way* means the through traffic lanes of the highway, exclusive of frontage roads, auxiliary lanes, and ramps.

(c) *Interstate System* means the National System of Interstate and Defence Highways described in section 103(d) of title 23 U.S.C.

(d) *Primary system* means the Federal-aid highway system described in section 103(b) of title 23 U.S.C.

(e) *Erect* means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.

(f) *Maintain* means to allow to exist.

(g) *Scenic area* means any area of particular scenic beauty or historical significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, and includes interests in land which have been acquired for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty.

(h) *Parkland* means any publicly owned land which is designated or used as a public park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge or historic site.

(i) *Federal or State law* means a Federal or State constitutional provision or statute, or an ordinance, rule, or regulation enacted or adopted by a State or Federal agency or a political subdivision of a State pursuant to a Federal or State constitution or statute.

(j) *Visible* means capable of being seen (whether or not legible) without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.

(k) *Freeway* means a divided arterial highway for through traffic with full control of access.

(l) *Rest area* means an area or site established and maintained within or adjacent to the highway right-of-way by or under public supervision or control for the convenience of the traveling public.

(m) *Directional and official signs and notices* includes only official signs and notices, public utility signs, service club and religious notices, public service signs, and directional signs.

(n) *Official signs and notices* means signs and notices erected and maintained by public officers or public agencies within their territorial or zoning jurisdiction and pursuant to and in accordance with direction or authorization contained in Federal, State, or local law for the purposes of carrying out an official duty or responsibility. Historical markers authorized by State law and erected by State or local government agencies or nonprofit historical societies may be considered official signs.

(o) *Public utility signs* means warning signs, informational signs, notices, or markers which are customarily erected and maintained by publicly or privately owned public utilities, as essential to their operations.

(p) *Service club and religious notices* means signs and notices, whose erection is authorized by law, relating to meetings of nonprofit service clubs or charitable associations, or religious services, which signs do not exceed 8 square feet in area.

(q) *Public service signs* means signs located on school bus stop shelters, which signs:

(1) Identify the donor, sponsor, or contributor of said shelters;

(2) Contain public service messages, which shall occupy not less than 50 percent of the area of the sign;

(3) Contain no other message;

(4) Are located on schoolbus shelters which are authorized or approved by city, county, or State law, regulation, or ordinance, and at places approved by the city, county, or State agency controlling the highway involved; and

(5) May not exceed 32 square feet in area. Not more than one sign on each shelter shall face in any one direction.

(r) *Directional signs* means signs containing directional information about public places owned or operated by Federal, State, or local governments or their agencies; publicly or privately owned natural phenomena, historic, cultural, scientific, educational, and religious sites; and areas of natural scenic beauty or naturally suited for outdoor recreation, deemed to be in the interest of the traveling public.

(s) *State* means any one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.

(t) *Urban area* means an urbanized area or, in the case of an urbanized area encompassing more than one State, that part of the urbanized areas in each such State, or an urban place as designated by the Bureau of the Census having a population of five thousand or more and not within any urbanized area, within boundaries to be fixed by responsible State and local officials in cooperation with each other, subject to approval by the Secretary. Such boundaries shall, as a minimum, encompass the entire urban place designated by the Bureau of the Census.

[38 FR 16044, June 30, 1973, as amended at 40 FR 21934, May 20, 1975]

§ 750.154 Standards for directional signs.

The following apply only to directional signs:

(a) *General.* The following signs are prohibited:

(1) Signs advertising activities that are illegal under Federal or State laws or regulations in effect at the location of those signs or at the location of those activities.

(2) Signs located in such a manner as to obscure or otherwise interfere with the effectiveness of an official traffic

sign, signal, or device, or obstruct or interfere with the driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic.

(3) Signs which are erected or maintained upon trees or painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features.

(4) Obsolete signs.

(5) Signs which are structurally unsafe or in disrepair.

(6) Signs which move or have any animated or moving parts.

(7) Signs located in rest areas, parklands or scenic areas.

(b) *Size.* (1) No sign shall exceed the following limits:

(i) Maximum area—150 square feet.

(ii) Maximum height—20 feet.

(iii) Maximum length—20 feet.

(2) All dimensions include border and trim, but exclude supports.

(c) *Lighting.* Signs may be illuminated, subject to the following:

(1) Signs which contain, include, or are illuminated by any flashing, intermittent, or moving light or lights are prohibited.

(2) Signs which are not effectively shielded so as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled way of an Interstate or primary highway or which are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or which otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle are prohibited.

(3) No sign may be so illuminated as to interfere with the effectiveness of or obscure an official traffic sign, device, or signal.

(d) *Spacing.* (1) Each location of a directional sign must be approved by the State highway department.

(2) No directional sign may be located within 2,000 feet of an interchange, or intersection at grade along the Interstate System or other freeways (measured along the Interstate or freeway from the nearest point of the beginning or ending of pavement widening at the exit from or entrance to the main traveled way).

(3) No directional sign may be located within 2,000 feet of a rest area, parkland, or scenic area.

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(4)(i) No two directional signs facing the same direction of travel shall be spaced less than 1 mile apart;

(ii) Not more than three directional signs pertaining to the same activity and facing the same direction of travel may be erected along a single route approaching the activity;

(iii) Signs located adjacent to the Interstate System shall be within 75 air miles of the activity; and

(iv) Signs located adjacent to the primary system shall be within 50 air miles of the activity.

(e) *Message content.* The message on directional signs shall be limited to the identification of the attraction or activity and directional information useful to the traveler in locating the attraction, such as mileage, route numbers, or exit numbers. Descriptive words or phrases, and pictorial or photographic representations of the activity or its environs are prohibited.

(f) *Selection method and criteria.* (1) Privately owned activities or attractions eligible for directional signing are limited to the following: natural phenomena; scenic attractions; historic, educational, cultural, scientific, and religious sites; and outdoor recreational areas.

(2) To be eligible, privately owned attractions or activities must be nationally or regionally known, and of outstanding interest to the traveling public.

(3) Each State shall develop specific selection methods and criteria to be used in determining whether or not an activity qualifies for this type of signing. A statement as to selection methods and criteria shall be furnished to the Secretary of Transportation before the State permits the erection of any such signs under section 131(c) of title 23 U.S.C., and this part.

§ 750.155 State standards.

This part does not prohibit a State from establishing and maintaining standards which are more restrictive with respect to directional and official signs and notices along the Federal-aid highway systems than these national standards.

[38 FR 16044, June 20, 1973, as amended at 40 FR 21934, May 20, 1975]

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Subpart C [Reserved]

Subpart D—Outdoor Advertising (Acquisition of Rights of Sign and Sign Site Owners)

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 131 and 315; 23 CFR 1.32 and 1.48(b).

SOURCE: 39 FR 27436, July 29, 1974, unless otherwise noted.

§ 750.301 Purpose.

To prescribe the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policies relating to Federal participation in the costs of acquiring the property interests necessary for removal of nonconforming advertising signs, displays and devices on the Federal-aid Primary and Interstate Systems, including toll sections on such systems, regardless of whether Federal funds participated in the construction thereof. This regulation should not be construed to authorize any additional rights in eminent domain not already existing under State law or under 23 U.S.C. 131(g).

§ 750.302 Policy.

(a) Just compensation shall be paid for the rights and interests of the sign and site owner in those outdoor advertising signs, displays, or devices which are lawfully existing under State law, in conformance with the terms of 23 U.S.C. 131.

(b)(1) Federal reimbursement will be made on the basis of 75 percent of the acquisition, removal and incidental costs legally incurred or obligated by the State.

(2) Federal funds will participate in 100 percent of the costs of removal of those signs which were removed prior to January 4, 1975, by relocation, pursuant to the provisions of 23 CFR § 750.305(a)(2), and which are required to be removed as a result of the amendments made to 23 U.S.C. 131 by the Federal-Aid Highway Amendments of 1974, Pub. L. 93-643, section 109, January 4, 1975. Such signs must have been relocated to a legal site, must have been legally maintained since the relocation, and must not have been substantially changed, as defined by the State maintenance standards, issued pursuant to 23 CFR 750.707(b).

(c) Title III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4651, *et seq.*) applies except where complete conformity would defeat the purposes set forth in 42 U.S.C. 4651, would impede the expeditious implementation of the sign removal program or would increase administrative costs out of proportion to the cost of the interests being acquired or extinguished.

(d) Projects for the removal of outdoor advertising signs including hardship acquisitions should be programmed and authorized in accordance with normal program procedures for right-of-way projects.

[39 FR 27436, July 29, 1974; 39 FR 30349, Aug. 22, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 31198, July 27, 1976]

§ 750.303 Definitions.

(a) *Sign*. An outdoor sign, light, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard or other thing which is designed, intended of the advertising or informative contents of which is visible from any place on the main-traveled way of the Interstate or Primary Systems, whether the same be permanent or portable installation.

(b) *Lease (license, permit, agreement, contract or easement)*. An agreement, oral or in writing, by which possession or use of land or interests therein is given by the owner or other person to another person for a specified purpose.

(c) *Leasehold value*. The leasehold value is the present worth of the difference between the contractual rent and the current market rent at the time of the appraisal.

(d) *Illegal sign*. One which was erected and/or maintained in violation of State law.

(e) *Nonconforming sign*. One which was lawfully erected, but which does not comply with the provisions of State law or State regulations passed at a later date or which later fails to comply with State law or State regulations due to changed conditions. Illegally erected or maintained signs are not nonconforming signs.

(f) *1966 inventory*. The record of the survey of advertising signs and junkyards compiled by the State highway department.

(g) *Abandoned sign*. One in which no one has an interest, or as defined by State law.

§ 750.304 State policies and procedures.

The State's written policies and operating procedures for implementing its sign removal program under State law and complying with 23 U.S.C. 131 and its proposed time schedule for sign removal and procedure for reporting its accomplishments shall be submitted to the FHWA for approval within 90 days of the date of this regulation. This statement should be supported by the State's regulations implementing its program. Revisions to the State's policies and procedures shall be submitted to the FHWA for approval. The statement should contain provisions for the review of its policies and procedure to meet changing conditions, adoption of improved procedures, and for internal review to assure compliance. The statement shall include as a minimum the following:

(a) *Project priorities*. The following order of priorities is recommended.

(1) Illegal and abandoned signs.

(2) Hardship situations.

(3) Nominal value signs.

(4) Signs in areas which have been designated as scenic under authority of State law.

(5) Product advertising on:

(i) Rural interstate highway.

(ii) Rural primary highway.

(iii) Urban areas.

(6) Nontourist-oriented directional advertising.

(7) Tourist-oriented directional advertising.

(b) *Programing*. (1) A sign removal project may consist of any group of proposed sign removals. The signs may be those belonging to one company or those located along a single route, all of the signs in a single county or other locality, hardship situations, individually or grouped, such as those involving vandalized signs, or all of a sign owner's signs in a given State or area, or any similar grouping.

(2) A project for sign removal on other than a Federal-aid primary route basis e.g., a countywide project or a project involving only signs owned by one company, should be identified as

CAF-000B(), continuing the numbering sequence which began with the sign inventory project in 1966.

(3) Where it would not interfere with the State's operations, the State should program sign removal projects to minimize disruption of business.

(c) *Valuation and review methods*—(1) *Schedules—formulas*. Schedules, formulas or other methods to simplify valuation of signs and sites are recommended for the purpose of minimizing administrative and legal expenses necessarily involved in determining just compensation by individual appraisals and litigation. They do not purport to be a basis for the determination of just compensation under eminent domain.

(2) *Appraisals*. Where appropriate, the State may use its approved appraisal report forms including those for abbreviated or short form appraisals. Where a sign or site owner does not accept the amount computed under an approved schedule, formula, or other simplified method, an appraisal shall be utilized.

(3) *Leaseholds*. When outdoor advertising signs and sign sites involve a leasehold value, the State's procedures should provide for determining value in the same manner as any other real estate leasehold that has value to the lessee.

(4) *Severance damages*. The State has the responsibility of justifying the recognition of severance damages pursuant to 23 CFR 710.304(h), and the law of the State before Federal participation will be allowed. Generally, Federal participation will not be allowed in the payment of severance damages to remaining signs, or other property of a sign company alleged to be due to the taking of certain of the company's signs. Unity of use of the separate properties, as required by applicable principles of eminent domain law, must be shown to exist before participation in severance damages will be allowed. Moreover, the value of the remaining signs or other real property must be diminished by virtue of the taking of such signs. Payments for severance damages to economic plants or loss of business profits are not compensable. Severance damage cases must be submitted to the FHWA for prior concurrence, together with complete legal

and appraisal justification for payment of these damages. To assist the FHWA in its evaluation, the following data will accompany any submission regarding severance:

(i) One copy of each appraisal in which this was analyzed. One copy of the State's review appraiser analysis and determination of market value.

(ii) A plan or map showing the location of each sign.

(iii) An opinion by the State highway department's chief legal officer that severance is appropriate in accordance with State law together with a legal opinion that, in the instant case, the damages constitute severance as opposed to consequential damage as a matter of law. The opinion shall include a determination, and the basis therefor, that the specific taking of some of an outdoor advertiser's signs constitutes a distinct economic unit, and that unity of use of the separate properties in conformity with applicable principles of eminent domain law had been satisfactorily established. A legal memorandum must be furnished citing and discussing cases and other authorities supporting the State's position.

(5) *Review of value estimates*. All estimates of value shall be reviewed by a person other than the one who made the estimate. Appraisal reports shall be reviewed and approved prior to initiation of negotiations. All other estimates shall be reviewed before the agreement becomes final.

(d) *Nominal value plan*. (1) This plan may provide for the removal costs of eligible nominal value signs and for payments up to \$250 for each nonconforming sign, and up to \$100 for each nonconforming sign site.

(2) The State's procedures may provide for negotiations for sign sites and sign removals to be accomplished simultaneously without prior review.

(3) Releases or agreements executed by the sign and/or site owner should include the identification of the sign, statement of ownership, price to be paid, interest acquired, and removal rights.

(4) It is not expected that salvage value will be a consideration in most acquisitions; however, the State's procedures may provide that the sign may

be turned over to the sign owner, site owner, contractor, or individual as all or a part of the consideration for its removal, without any project credits.

(5) Programing and authorizations will be in accord with § 750.308 of this regulation. A detailed estimate of value of each individual sign is not necessary. The project may be programed and authorized as one project.

(e) *Sign removal.* The State's procedural statement should include provision for:

- (1) Owner retention.
- (2) Salvage value.
- (3) State removal.

[39 FR 27436, July 29, 1974; 42 FR 30835, June 17, 1977, as amended at 50 FR 34093, Aug. 23, 1985]

§ 750.305 Federal participation.

(a) Federal funds may participate in:

(1) Payments made to a sign owner for his right, title and interest in a sign, and where applicable, his leasehold value in a sign site, and to a site owner for his right and interest in a site, which is his right to erect and maintain the existing nonconforming sign on such site.

(2) The cost of relocating a sign to the extent of the cost to acquire the sign, less salvage value if any.

(3) A duplicate payment for the site owner's interest of \$2,500 or less because of a bona fide error in ownership, provided the State has followed its title search procedures as set forth in its policy and procedure submission.

(4) The cost of removal of signs, partially completed sign structures, supporting poles, abandoned signs and those which are illegal under State law within the controlled areas, provided such costs are incurred in accordance with State law. Removal may be by State personnel on a force account basis or by contract. Documentation for Federal participation in such removal projects should be in accord with the State's normal force account and contractual reimbursement procedures. The State should maintain a record of the number of signs removed. These data should be retained in project records and reported on the periodic report required under § 750.308 of this regulation.

(5) Signs materially damaged by vandals. Federal funds shall be limited to the Federal pro-rata share of the fair market value of the sign immediately before the vandalism occurred minus the estimated cost of repairing and re-erecting the sign. If the State chooses, it may use its FHWA approved nominal value plan procedure to acquire these signs.

(6) The cost of acquiring and removing completed sign structures which have been blank or painted out beyond the period of time established by the State for normal maintenance and change of message, provided the sign owner can establish that his nonconforming use was not abandoned or discontinued, and provided such costs are incurred in accordance with State law, or regulation. The evidence considered by the State as acceptable for establishing or showing that the nonconforming use has not been abandoned or voluntarily discontinued shall be set forth in the State's policy and procedures.

(7) In the event a sign was omitted in the 1966 inventory, and the State supports a determination that the sign was in existence prior to October 22, 1965, the costs are eligible for Federal participation.

(b) Federal funds may not participate in:

(1) Cost of title certificates, title insurance, title opinion or similar evidence or proof of title in connection with the acquisition of a landowner's right to erect and maintain a sign or signs when the amount of payment to the landowner for his interest is \$2,500 or less, unless required by State law. However, Federal funds may participate in the costs of securing some lesser evidence or proof of title such as searches and investigations by State highway department personnel to the extent necessary to determine ownership, affidavit of ownership by the owner, bill of sale, etc. The State's procedure for determining evidence of title should be set forth in the State's policy and procedure submission.

(2) Payments to a sign owner where the sign was erected without permission of the property owner unless the sign owner can establish his legal right

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to erect and maintain the sign. However, such signs may be removed by State personnel on a force account basis or by contract with Federal participation except where the sign owner reimburses the State for removal.

(3) Acquisition costs paid for abandoned or illegal signs, potential sign sites, or signs which were built during a period of time which makes them ineligible for compensation under 23 U.S.C. 131, or for rights in sites on which signs have been abandoned or illegally erected by a sign owner.

(4) The acquisition cost of supporting poles or partially completed sign structures in nonconforming areas which do not have advertising or informative content thereon unless the owner can show to the State's satisfaction he has not abandoned the structure. When the State has determined the sign structure has not been abandoned, Federal funds will participate in the acquisition of the structure, provided the cost are incurred in accordance with State law.

§ 750.306 Documentation for Federal participation.

The following information concerning each sign must be available in the State's files to be eligible for Federal participation.

(a) *Payment to sign owner.* (1) A photograph of the sign in place. Exceptions may be made in cases where in one transaction the State has acquired a number of a company's nominal value signs similar in size, condition and shape. In such cases, only a sample of representative photographs need be provided to document the type and condition of the signs.

(2) Evidence showing the sign was nonconforming as of the date of taking.

(3) Value documentation and proof of obligation of funds.

(4) Satisfactory indication of ownership of the sign and compensable interest therein (e.g., lease or other agreement with the property owner, or an affidavit, certification, or other such evidence of ownership).

(5) Evidence that the sign falls within one of the three categories shown in § 750.302 of this regulation. The specific category should be identified.

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(6) Evidence that the right, title, or interest pertaining to the sign has passed to the State, or that the sign has been removed.

(b) *Payment to the site owner.* (1) Evidence that an agreement has been reached between the State and owner.

(2) Value documentation and proof of obligation of funds.

(3) Satisfactory indication of ownership or compensable interest.

(c) In those cases where Federal funds participate in 100 percent of the cost of removal, the State file shall contain the records of the relocation made prior to January 4, 1975.

[39 FR 27436, July 29, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 31198, July 27, 1976]

§ 750.307 FHWA project approval.

Authorization to proceed with acquisitions on a sign removal project shall not be issued until such time as the State has submitted to FHWA the following:

(a) A general description of the project.

(b) The total number of signs to be acquired.

(c) The total estimated cost of the sign removal project, including a breakdown of incidental, acquisition and removal costs.

§ 750.308 Reports.

Periodic reports on site acquisitions and actual sign removals shall be submitted on FHWA Form 1424 and as prescribed.¹

[39 FR 27436, July 29, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 9321, Mar. 4, 1976]

Subpart E—Signs Exempt From Removal in Defined Areas

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 131 and 315, 49 CFR 1.48, 23 CFR 1.32.

SOURCE: 41 FR 45827, Oct. 18, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

§ 750.501 Purpose.

This subpart sets forth the procedures pursuant to which a State may, if it desires, seek an exemption from the acquisition requirements of 23

¹Forms are available at FHWA Division Offices located in each State.

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U.S.C. 131 for signs giving directional information about goods and services in the interest of the traveling public in defined areas which would suffer substantial economic hardship if such signs were removed. This exemption may be granted pursuant to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131(o).

§ 750.502 Applicability.

The provisions of this subpart apply to signs adjacent to the Interstate and primary systems which are required to be controlled under 23 U.S.C. 131.

§ 750.503 Exemptions.

(a) The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) may approve a State's request to exempt certain nonconforming signs, displays, and devices (hereinafter called signs) within a defined area from being acquired under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131 upon a showing that removal would work a substantial economic hardship throughout that area. A defined area is an area with clearly established geographical boundaries defined by the State which the State can evaluate as an economic entity. Neither the States nor FHWA shall rely on individual claims of economic hardship. Exempted signs must:

(1) Have been lawfully erected prior to May 5, 1976, and must continue to be lawfully maintained.

(2) Continue to provide the directional information to goods and services offered at the same enterprise in the defined area in the interest of the traveling public that was provided on May 5, 1976. Repair and maintenance of these signs shall conform with the State's approved maintenance standards as required by subpart G of this part.

(b) To obtain the exemption permitted by 23 U.S.C. 131(o), the State shall establish:

(1) Its requirements for the directional content of signs to qualify the signs as directional signs to goods and services in the defined area.

(2) A method of economic analysis clearly showing that the removal of signs would work a substantial economic hardship throughout the defined area.

(c) In support of its request for exemption, the State shall submit to the FHWA:

(1) Its requirements and method (see § 750.503(b)).

(2) The limits of the defined area(s) requested for exemption, a listing of signs to be exempted, their location, and the name of the enterprise advertised on May 5, 1976.

(3) The application of the requirements and method to the defined areas, demonstrating that the signs provide directional information to goods and services of interest to the traveling public in the defined area, and that removal would work a substantial economic hardship in the defined area(s).

(4) A statement that signs in the defined area(s) not meeting the exemption requirements will be removed in accordance with State law.

(5) A statement that the defined area will be reviewed and evaluated at least every three (3) years to determine if an exemption is still warranted.

(d) The FHWA, upon receipt of a State's request for exemption, shall prior to approval:

(1) Review the State's requirements and methods for compliance with the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131 and this subpart.

(2) Review the State's request and the proposed exempted area for compliance with State requirements and methods.

(e) Nothing herein shall prohibit the State from acquiring signs in the defined area at the request of the sign owner.

(f) Nothing herein shall prohibit the State from imposing or maintaining stricter requirements.

Subpart F [Reserved]

Subpart G—Outdoor Advertising Control

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 131 and 315; 49 CFR 1.48.

SOURCE: 40 FR 42844, Sept. 16, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

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§ 750.701 Purpose.

This subpart prescribes the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policies and requirements relating to the effective control of outdoor advertising under 23 U.S.C. 131. The purpose of these policies and requirements is to assure that there is effective State control of outdoor advertising in areas adjacent to Interstate and Federal-aid primary highways. Nothing in this subpart shall be construed to prevent a State from establishing more stringent outdoor advertising control requirements along Interstate and Primary Systems than provided herein.

§ 750.702 Applicability.

The provisions of this subpart are applicable to all areas adjacent to the Federal-aid Interstate and Primary Systems, including toll sections thereof, except that within urban areas, these provisions apply only within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way. These provisions apply regardless of whether Federal funds participated in the costs of such highways. The provisions of this subpart do not apply to the Federal-aid Secondary or Urban Highway System.

§ 750.703 Definitions.

The terms as used in this subpart are defined as follows:

(a) *Commercial and industrial zones* are those districts established by the zoning authorities as being most appropriate for commerce, industry, or trade, regardless of how labeled. They are commonly categorized as commercial, industrial, business, manufacturing, highway service or highway business (when these latter are intended for highway-oriented business), retail, trade, warehouse, and similar classifications.

(b) *Erect* means to construct, build, raise, assemble, place, affix, attach, create, paint, draw, or in any other way bring into being or establish.

(c) *Federal-aid Primary Highway* means any highway on the system designated pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 103(b).

(d) *Interstate Highway* means any highway on the system defined in and designated, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 103(e).

(e) *Illegal sign* means one which was erected or maintained in violation of State law or local law or ordinance.

(f) *Lease* means an agreement, license, permit, or easement, oral or in writing, by which possession or use of land or interests therein is given for a specified purpose, and which is a valid contract under the laws of a State.

(g) *Maintain* means to allow to exist.

(h) *Main-traveled way* means the traveled way of a highway on which through traffic is carried. In the case of a divided highway, the traveled way of each of the separate roadways for traffic in opposite directions is a main-traveled way. It does not include such facilities as frontage roads, turning roadways, or parking areas.

(i) *Sign, display or device*, hereinafter referred to as “sign,” means an outdoor advertising sign, light, display, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, billboard, or other thing which is designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform, any part of the advertising or informative contents of which is visible from any place on the main-traveled way of the Interstate or Primary Systems, whether the same be permanent or portable installation.

(j) *State law* means a State constitutional provision or statute, or an ordinance, rule or regulation, enacted or adopted by a State.

(k) *Unzoned area* means an area where there is no zoning in effect. It does not include areas which have a rural zoning classification or land uses established by zoning variances or special exceptions.

(l) *Unzoned commercial or industrial areas* are unzoned areas actually used for commercial or industrial purposes as defined in the agreements made between the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation (Secretary), and each State pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 131(d).

(m) *Urban area* is as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a).

(n) *Visible* means capable of being seen, whether or not readable, without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.

§ 750.704 Statutory requirements.

(a) 23 U.S.C. 131 provides that signs adjacent to the Interstate and Federal-

aid Primary Systems which are visible from the main-traveled way and within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way, and those additional signs beyond 660 feet outside of urban areas which are visible from the main-traveled way and erected with the purpose of their message being read from such main-traveled way, shall be limited to the following:

(1) Directional and official signs and notice which shall conform to national standards promulgated by the Secretary in subpart B, part 750, chapter I, 23 CFR, National Standards for Directional and Official Signs;

(2) Signs advertising the sale or lease of property upon which they are located;

(3) Signs advertising activities conducted on the property on which they are located;

(4) Signs within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way within areas adjacent to the Interstate and Federal-aid Primary Systems which are zoned industrial or commercial under the authority of State law;

(5) Signs within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way within areas adjacent to the Interstate and Federal-aid Primary Systems which are unzoned commercial or industrial areas, which areas are determined by agreement between the State and the Secretary; and

(6) Signs lawfully in existence on October 22, 1965, which are determined to be landmark signs.

(b) 23 U.S.C. 131(d) provides that signs in § 750.704(a) (4) and (5) must comply with size, lighting, and spacing requirements, to be determined by agreement between the State and the Secretary.

(c) 23 U.S.C. 131 does not permit signs to be located within zoned or unzoned commercial or industrial areas beyond 660 feet of the right-of-way adjacent to the Interstate or Federal-aid Primary System, outside of urban areas.

(d) 23 U.S.C. 131 provides that signs not permitted under § 750.704 of this regulation must be removed by the State.

§ 750.705 Effective control.

In order to provide effective control of outdoor advertising, the State must:

(a) Prohibit the erection of new signs other than those which fall under § 750.704(a)(1) through (6);

(b) Assure that signs erected under § 750.704(a)(4) and (5) comply, at a minimum, with size, lighting, and spacing criteria contained in the agreement between the Secretary and the State;

(c) Assure that signs erected under § 750.704(a)(1) comply with the national standards contained in subpart B, part 750, chapter I, 23 CFR;

(d) Remove illegal signs expeditiously;

(e) Remove nonconforming signs with just compensation within the time period set by 23 U.S.C. 131 (subpart D, part 750, chapter I, 23 CFR, sets forth policies for the acquisition and compensation for such signs);

(f) Assure that signs erected under § 750.704(a)(6) comply with § 750.710, Landmark Signs, if landmark signs are allowed;

(g) Establish criteria for determining which signs have been erected with the purpose of their message being read from the main-traveled way of an Interstate or primary highway, except where State law makes such criteria unnecessary. Where a sign is erected with the purpose of its message being read from two or more highways, one or more of which is a controlled highway, the more stringent of applicable control requirements will apply;

(h) Develop laws, regulations, and procedures to accomplish the requirements of this subpart;

(i) Establish enforcement procedures sufficient to discover illegally erected or maintained signs shortly after such occurrence and cause their prompt removal; and

(j) Submit regulations and enforcement procedures to FHWA for approval.

[40 FR 42844, Sept. 16, 1975; 40 FR 49777, Oct. 24, 1975]

§ 750.706 Sign control in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas.

The following requirements apply to signs located in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way adjacent to the Interstate and Federal-aid primary highways.

(a) The State by law or regulation shall, in conformity with its agreement with the Secretary, set criteria for size, lighting, and spacing of outdoor advertising signs located in commercial or industrial zoned or unzoned areas, as defined in the agreement, adjacent to Interstate and Federal-aid primary highways. If the agreement between the Secretary and the State includes a grandfather clause, the criteria for size, lighting, and spacing will govern only those signs erected subsequent to the date specified in the agreement. The States may adopt more restrictive criteria than are presently contained in agreements with the Secretary.

(b) Agreement criteria which permit multiple sign structures to be considered as one sign for spacing purposes must limit multiple sign structures to signs which are physically contiguous, or connected by the same structure or cross-bracing, or located not more than 15 feet apart at their nearest point in the case of back-to-back or “V” type signs.

(c) Where the agreement and State law permits control by local zoning authorities, these controls may govern in lieu of the size, lighting, and spacing controls set forth in the agreement, subject to the following:

(1) The local zoning authority’s controls must include the regulation of size, of lighting and of spacing of outdoor advertising signs, in all commercial and industrial zones.

(2) The regulations established by local zoning authority may be either more restrictive or less restrictive than the criteria contained in the agreement, unless State law or regulations require equivalent or more restrictive local controls.

(3) If the zoning authority has been delegated, extraterritorial, jurisdiction under State law, and exercises control of outdoor advertising signs in commercial and industrial zones within this extraterritorial jurisdiction, control by the zoning authority may be accepted in lieu of agreement controls in such areas.

(4) The State shall notify the FHWA in writing of those zoning jurisdictions wherein local control applies. It will not be necessary to furnish a copy of

the zoning ordinance. The State shall periodically assure itself that the size, lighting, and spacing control provisions of zoning ordinances accepted under this section are actually being enforced by the local authorities.

(5) Nothing contained herein shall relieve the State of the responsibility of limiting signs within controlled areas to commercial and industrial zones.

§ 750.707 Nonconforming signs.

(a) *General.* The provisions of § 750.707 apply to nonconforming signs which must be removed under State laws and regulations implementing 23 U.S.C. 131. These provisions also apply to nonconforming signs located in commercial and industrial areas within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way which come under the so-called grandfather clause contained in State-Federal agreements. These provisions do not apply to conforming signs regardless of when or where they are erected.

(b) *Nonconforming signs.* A nonconforming sign is a sign which was lawfully erected but does not comply with the provisions of State law or State regulations passed at a later date or later fails to comply with State law or State regulations due to changed conditions. Changed conditions include, for example, signs lawfully in existence in commercial areas which at a later date become noncommercial, or signs lawfully erected on a secondary highway later classified as a primary highway.

(c) *Grandfather clause.* At the option of the State, the agreement may contain a grandfather clause under which criteria relative to size, lighting, and spacing of signs in zoned and unzoned commercial and industrial areas within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way apply only to new signs to be erected after the date specified in the agreement. Any sign lawfully in existence in a commercial or industrial area on such date may remain even though it may not comply with the size, lighting, or spacing criteria. This clause only allows an individual sign at its particular location for the duration of its normal life subject to customary maintenance. Preexisting signs covered by a grandfather clause, which do not comply with the agreement criteria

have the status of nonconforming signs.

(d) *Maintenance and continuance.* In order to maintain and continue a nonconforming sign, the following conditions apply:

(1) The sign must have been actually in existence at the time the applicable State law or regulations became effective as distinguished from a contemplated use such as a lease or agreement with the property owner. There are two exceptions to actual existence as follows:

(i) Where a permit or similar specific State governmental action was granted for the construction of a sign prior to the effective date of the State law or regulations and the sign owner acted in good faith and expended sums in reliance thereon. This exception shall not apply in instances where large numbers of permits were applied for and issued to a single sign owner, obviously in anticipation of the passage of a State control law.

(ii) Where the State outdoor advertising control law or the Federal-State agreement provides that signs in commercial and industrial areas may be erected within six (6) months after the effective date of the law or agreement provided a lease dated prior to such effective date was filed with the State and recorded within thirty (30) days following such effective date.

(2) There must be existing property rights in the sign affected by the State law or regulations. For example, paper signs nailed to trees, abandoned signs and the like are not protected.

(3) The sign may be sold, leased, or otherwise transferred without affecting its status, but its location may not be changed. A nonconforming sign removed as a result of a right-of-way taking or for any other reason may be relocated to a conforming area but cannot be reestablished at a new location as a nonconforming use.

(4) The sign must have been lawful on the effective date of the State law or regulations, and must continue to be lawfully maintained.

(5) The sign must remain substantially the same as it was on the effective date of the State law or regulations. Reasonable repair and maintenance of the sign, including a change of

advertising message, is not a change which would terminate nonconforming rights. Each State shall develop its own criteria to determine when customary maintenance ceases and a substantial change has occurred which would terminate nonconforming rights.

(6) The sign may continue as long as it is not destroyed, abandoned, or discontinued. If permitted by State law and reerected in kind, exception may be made for signs destroyed due to vandalism and other criminal or tortious acts.

(i) Each state shall develop criteria to define destruction, abandonment and discontinuance. These criteria may provide that a sign which for a designated period of time has obsolete advertising matter or is without advertising matter or is in need of substantial repair may constitute abandonment or discontinuance. Similarly, a sign damaged in excess of a certain percentage of its replacement cost may be considered destroyed.

(ii) Where an existing nonconforming sign ceases to display advertising matter, a reasonable period of time to replace advertising content must be established by each State. Where new content is not put on a structure within the established period, the use of the structure as a nonconforming outdoor advertising sign is terminated and shall constitute an abandonment or discontinuance. Where a State establishes a period of more than one (1) year as a reasonable period for change of message, it shall justify that period as a customary enforcement practice within the State. This established period may be waived for an involuntary discontinuance such as the closing of a highway for repair in front of the sign.

(e) *Just compensation.* The States are required to pay just compensation for the removal of nonconforming lawfully existing signs in accordance with the terms of 23 U.S.C. 131 and the provisions of subpart D, part 750, chapter I, 23 CFR. The conditions which establish a right to maintain a nonconforming sign and therefore the right to compensation must pertain at the time it is acquired or removed.

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§ 750.708 Acceptance of state zoning.

(a) 23 U.S.C. 131(d) provide that signs “may be erected and maintained within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way within areas . . . which are zoned industrial or commercial under authority of State law.” Section 131(d) further provides, “The States shall have full authority under their own zoning laws to zone areas for commercial or industrial purposes, and the actions of the States in this regard will be accepted for the purposes of this Act.”

(b) State and local zoning actions must be taken pursuant to the State’s zoning enabling statute or constitutional authority and in accordance therewith. Action which is not a part of comprehensive zoning and is created primarily to permit outdoor advertising structures, is not recognized as zoning for outdoor advertising control purposes.

(c) Where a unit of government has not zoned in accordance with statutory authority or is not authorized to zone, the definition of an unzoned commercial or industrial area in the State-Federal agreement will apply within that political subdivision or area.

(d) A zone in which limited commercial or industrial activities are permitted as an incident to other primary land uses is not considered to be a commercial or industrial zone for outdoor advertising control purposes.

§ 750.709 On-property or on-premise advertising.

(a) A sign which consists solely of the name of the establishment or which identifies the establishment’s principal or accessory products or services offered on the property is an on-property sign.

(b) When a sign consists principally of brand name or trade name advertising and the product or service advertised is only incidental to the principal activity, or if it brings rental income to the property owner, it shall be considered the business of outdoor advertising and not an on-property sign.

(c) A sale or lease sign which also advertises any product or service not conducted upon and unrelated to the business or selling or leasing the land on

which the sign is located is not an on-property sign.

(d) Signs are exempt from control under 23 U.S.C. 131 if they solely advertise the sale or lease of property on which they are located or advertise activities conducted on the property on which they are located. These signs are subject to regulation (subpart A, part 750, chapter I, 23 CFR) in those States which have executed a bonus agreement, 23 U.S.C. 131(j). State laws or regulations shall contain criteria for determining exemptions. These criteria may include:

(1) A property test for determining whether a sign is located on the same property as the activity or property advertised; and

(2) A purpose test for determining whether a sign has as its sole purpose the identification of the activity located on the property or its products or services, or the sale or lease of the property on which the sign is located.

(3) The criteria must be sufficiently specific to curb attempts to improperly qualify outdoor advertising as “on-property” signs, such as signs on narrow strips of land contiguous to the advertised activity when the purpose is clearly to circumvent 23 U.S.C. 131.

§ 750.710 Landmark signs.

(a) 23 U.S.C. 131(c) permits the existence of signs lawfully in existence on October 22, 1965, determined by the State, subject to the approval of the Secretary, to be landmark signs, including signs on farm structures or natural surfaces, of historic or artistic significance, the preservation of which is consistent with the purpose of 23 U.S.C. 131.

(b) States electing to permit landmark signs under 23 U.S.C. 131(c) shall submit a one-time list to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. The list should identify each sign as being in the original 1966 inventory. In the event a sign was omitted in the 1966 inventory, the State may submit other evidence to support a determination that the sign was in existence on October 22, 1965.

(c) Reasonable maintenance, repair, and restoration of a landmark sign is permitted. Substantial change in size,

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lighting, or message content will terminate its exempt status.

§ 750.711 Structures which have never displayed advertising material.

Structures, including poles, which have never displayed advertising or informative content are subject to control or removal when advertising content visible from the main-traveled way is added or affixed. When this is done, an "outdoor advertising sign" has then been erected which must comply with the State law in effect on that date.

§ 750.712 Reclassification of signs.

Any sign lawfully erected after the effective date of a State outdoor advertising control law which is reclassified from legal-conforming to nonconforming and subject to removal under revised State statutes or regulations and policy pursuant to this regulation is eligible for Federal participation in just compensation payments and other eligible costs.

§ 750.713 Bonus provisions.

23 U.S.C. 131(j) specifically provides that any State which had entered into a bonus agreement before June 30, 1965, will be entitled to remain eligible to receive bonus payments provided it continues to carry out its bonus agreement. Bonus States are not exempt from the other provisions of 23 U.S.C. 131. If a State elects to comply with both programs, it must extend controls to the Primary System, and continue to carry out its bonus agreement along the Interstate System except where 23 U.S.C. 131, as amended, imposes more stringent requirements.

PART 751—JUNKYARD CONTROL AND ACQUISITION

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 136 and 315, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347 and 4601-4655, 23 CFR 1.32, 49 CFR 1.48, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 40 FR 8551, Feb. 28, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

§ 751.1 Purpose.

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 136, this part prescribes Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] policies and procedures relating to the exercise of effective control by the States of junkyards in areas adjacent to the Interstate and Federal-aid primary systems. Nothing in this part shall be construed to prevent a State from establishing more stringent junkyard control requirements than provided herein.

[40 FR 12260, Mar. 18, 1975]

§ 751.3 Applicability.

The provisions of this part are applicable to all areas within 1,000 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main traveled way of all Federal-aid Primary and Interstate Systems regardless of whether Federal funds participated in the construction thereof, including toll sections of such highways. This part does not apply to the Urban System.

§ 751.5 Policy.

In carrying out the purposes of this part:

(a) Emphasis should be placed on encouraging recycling of scrap and junk where practicable, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.*);

(b) Every effort should be made to screen nonconforming junkyards which are to continue as ongoing businesses; and

(c) Nonconforming junkyards should be relocated only as a last resort.

§ 751.7 Definitions.

For purposes of this part, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) *Junkyard*. (1) A Junkyard is an establishment or place of business which is maintained, operated or used for storing, keeping, buying, or selling

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junk, or for the maintenance or operation of an automobile graveyard. This definition includes scrap metal processors, auto-wrecking yards, salvage yards, scrap yards, autorecycling yards, used auto parts yards and temporary storage of automobile bodies and parts awaiting disposal as a normal part of a business operation when the business will continually have like materials located on the premises. The definition includes garbage dumps and sanitary landfills. The definition does not include litter, trash, and other debris scattered along or upon the highway, or temporary operations and outdoor storage of limited duration.

(2) An Automobile Graveyard is an establishment or place of business which is maintained, used, or operated for storing, keeping, buying, or selling wrecked, scrapped, ruined, or dismantled motor vehicles or motor vehicle parts. Ten or more such vehicles will constitute an automobile graveyard.

(3) An Illegal Junkyard is one which was established or is maintained in violation of State law.

(4) A Nonconforming Junkyard is one which was lawfully established, but which does not comply with the provisions of State law or State regulations passed at a later date or which later fails to comply with State regulations due to changed conditions. Illegally established junkyards are not nonconforming junkyards.

(b) *Junk.* Old or scrap metal, rope, rags, batteries, paper, trash, rubber, debris, waste, or junked, dismantled, or wrecked automobiles, or parts thereof.

(c) *Main traveled way.* The traveled way of a highway on which through traffic is carried. In the case of a divided highway, the traveled way of each of the separated roadways for traffic in opposite directions is a main traveled way. It does not include such facilities as frontage roads, turning roadways, or parking areas.

(d) *Industrial zones.* Those districts established by zoning authorities as being most appropriate for industry or manufacturing. A zone which simply permits certain industrial activities as an incident to the primary land use designation is not considered to be an industrial zone. The provisions of part 750, subpart G of this chapter relative

to Outdoor Advertising Control shall apply insofar as industrial zones are concerned.

(e) *Unzoned industrial areas.* An area where there is no zoning in effect and which is used primarily for industrial purposes as determined by the State and approved by the FHWA. An unzoned area cannot include areas which may have a rural zoning classification or land uses established by zoning variances or special exceptions.

[40 FR 8551, Feb. 28, 1975, as amended at 41 FR 9321, Mar. 4, 1976]

§ 751.9 Effective control.

(a) In order to provide effective control of junkyards located within 1,000 feet of Interstate and Federal-aid primary highways, the State must:

(1) Require such junkyards located outside of zoned and unzoned industrial areas to be screened or located so as not to be visible from the main traveled way, or be removed from sight.

(2) Require the screening or removal of nonconforming junkyards within a reasonable time, but no later than 5 years after the date the junkyard becomes nonconforming unless Federal funds are not available in adequate amounts to participate in the cost of such screening or removal as provided in 23 U.S.C. 136(j).

(3) Prohibit the establishment of new junkyards unless they comply with the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(4) Expeditiously require junkyards which are illegally established or maintained to conform to the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) Sanitary landfills as described herein need not be screened to satisfy requirements of Title 23, U.S.C., but landscaping should be required when the fill has been completed and operations have ceased, unless the landfill area is to be used for immediate development purposes. A sanitary landfill, for the purposes of this part, is a method of disposing of refuse on land without creating a nuisance or hazards to public health or safety by utilizing the principles of engineering to confine the refuse to the smallest practical area, to reduce it to the smallest practical volume, and to cover it with a layer of

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earth at the conclusion of each day's operation or at such more frequent intervals as may be necessary.

(c) The State shall have laws, rules, and procedures sufficient to provide effective control, to discover illegally established or maintained junkyards shortly after such occurrence, and to cause the compliance or removal of same promptly in accordance with State legal procedures.

§ 751.11 Nonconforming junkyards.

Subject to the provisions of § 751.9 of this part, the following requirements for the maintenance and continuance of a nonconforming junkyard apply:

(a) The junkyard must have been actually in existence at the time the State law or regulations became effective as distinguished from a contemplated use, except where a permit or similar specific State governmental action was granted for the establishment of a junkyard prior to the effective date of the State law or regulations, and the junkyard owner acted in good faith and expended sums in reliance thereon.

(b) There must be existing property rights in the junkyard or junk affected by the State law or regulation. Abandoned junk and junkyards, worthless junk, and the like are not similarly protected.

(c) If the location of a nonconforming junkyard is changed as a result of a right-of-way taking or for any other reason, it ceases to be a nonconforming junkyard, and shall be treated as a new junkyard at a new location.

(d) The nonconforming junkyard must have been lawful on the effective date of the State law or regulations and must continue to be lawfully maintained.

(e) The nonconforming junkyard may continue as long as it is not extended, enlarged, or changed in use. Once a junkyard has been made conforming, the placement of junk so that it may be seen above or beyond a screen, or otherwise becomes visible, shall be treated the same as the establishment of a new junkyard.

(f) The nonconforming junkyard may continue as long as it is not abandoned, destroyed, or voluntarily discontinued.

Each State should develop criteria to define these terms.

§ 751.13 Control measures.

(a) Consistent with the goals of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321), recycling of junk and scrap is to be encouraged to the greatest extent practicable in the implementation of the junkyard control program. Recycling should be considered in conjunction with other control measures. To facilitate recycling, junk or scrap should be moved to an automobile wrecker, or a scrap processor, or put to some other useful purpose.

(b) Every effort shall be made to screen where the junkyard is to continue as an ongoing business. Screening may be accomplished by use of natural objects, landscaping plantings, fences, and other appropriate means, including relocating inventory on site to utilize an existing natural screen or a screenable portion of the site.

(c) Where screening is used, it must, upon completion of the screening project, effectively screen the junkyard from the main traveled way of the highway on a year-round basis, and be compatible with the surroundings. Each State shall establish criteria governing the location, design, construction, maintenance, and materials used in fencing or screening.

(d) A junkyard should be relocated only when other control measures are not feasible. Junkyards should be relocated to a site not visible from the highway or to an industrial area, and should not be relocated to residential, commercial, or other areas where foreseeable environmental problems may develop.

(e) The State may develop and use other methods of operation to carry out the purposes of this directive, subject to prior FHWA approval.

§ 751.15 Just compensation.

(a) Just compensation shall be paid the owner for the relocation, removal, or disposal of junkyards lawfully established under State law, which are required to be removed, relocated, or disposed of pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 136.

(b) No rights to compensation accrue until a taking or removal has occurred. The conditions which establish a right

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to maintain and continue a nonconforming junkyard as provided in § 751.11 must pertain at the time of the taking or removal in order to establish a right to just compensation.

§ 751.17 Federal participation.

(a) Federal funds may participate in 75 percent of the costs of control measures incurred in carrying out the provisions of this part including necessary studies for particular projects, and the employment of fee landscape architects and other qualified consultants.

(b) Where State control standards are more stringent than Federal control requirements along Interstate and primary highways, the FHWA may approve Federal participation in the costs of applying the State standards on a statewide basis. Where State standards require control of junkyards in zoned or unzoned industrial areas, Federal funds may participate only if such action will make an effective contribution to the character of the area as a whole and the cost is reasonable, but such projects should be deferred until the work in the areas where control is required has progressed well toward completion.

(c) Generally, only costs associated with the acquisition of minimal real property interests, such as easements or temporary rights of entry, necessary to accomplish the purposes of this part are eligible for Federal participation. The State may request, on a case-by-case basis, participation in costs of other interests beyond the minimum necessary, including fee title.

(d) Federal funds may participate in costs to correct the inadequacies of screening in prior control projects where the inadequacy is due to higher screening standards established in this part or due to changed conditions.

(e) Federal funds may participate in the costs of moving junk or scrap to a recycling place of business, or in the case of junk with little or no recycling potential, to a site for permanent disposal. In the latter case, reasonable land rehabilitation costs or fees connected with the use of such a disposal site are also eligible. In a case where the acquisition of a permanent disposal site by the State would be the most economical method of disposal, Federal

funds may participate in the net cost (cost of acquisition less a credit after disposal) of a site obtained for this purpose.

(f) Federal funds may participate in control measure costs involved in any junkyard lawfully established or maintained under State law which is reclassified from conforming to nonconforming under revised State regulations and policy pursuant to this part.

(g) Federal funds may participate in the costs of acquisition of a dwelling in exceptional cases where such acquisition is found necessary and in the public interest, and where acquisition of the dwelling can be accomplished without resort to eminent domain.

(h) Federal funds shall not participate in:

(1) Costs associated with the control of illegal junkyards except for removal by State personnel on a force account basis or by contract, or in costs of controlling junkyards established after the effective date of the State's compliance law except where a conforming junkyard later becomes nonconforming due to changed conditions;

(2) Any costs associated with the acquisition of any dwelling or its related buildings if acquired through eminent domain in connection with the junkyard control program;

(3) Costs of acquisition of interests or rights as a measure for prohibition or control of the establishment of future junkyards;

(4) Costs of maintaining screening devices after they have been erected; or

(5) Costs of screening junk which has been or will be removed as a part of a junkyard control project.

§ 751.19 Documentation for Federal participation.

The following information concerning each eligible junkyard must be available in the States' files to be eligible for Federal participation in the costs thereof:

(a) Satisfactory evidence of ownership of the junk or junkyard or both.

(b) Value or cost documentation (including separate interests if applicable) including proof of obligation or payment of funds.

(c) Evidence that the necessary property interests have passed to the State

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and that the junk has been screened, relocated, removed or disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this part.

(d) If a dwelling has been acquired by condemnation, evidence that the costs involved are not included in the State's claim for participation.

[40 FR 8551, Feb. 28, 1975; 40 FR 12260, Mar. 18, 1975]

§ 751.21 Relocation assistance.

Relocation assistance benefits pursuant to 49 CFR part 24 are available for:

(a) The actual reasonable moving expenses of the junk, actual direct loss of tangible personal property and actual reasonable expenses in searching for a replacement business or, if the eligibility requirements are met, a payment in lieu of such expenses.

(b) Relocation assistance in locating a replacement business.

(c) Moving costs of personal property from a dwelling and relocation assistance in locating a replacement dwelling, provided the acquisition of the real property used for the business causes a person to vacate a dwelling.

(d) Replacement housing payments if the acquisition of the dwelling is found by FHWA to be necessary for the federally assisted junkyard control project.

[40 FR 8551, Feb. 28, 1975, as amended at 50 FR 34094, Aug. 23, 1985; 54 FR 47076, Nov. 9, 1989]

§ 751.23 Concurrent junkyard control and right-of-way projects.

The State is encouraged to coordinate junkyard control and highway right-of-way projects. Expenses incurred in furtherance of concurrent projects shall be prorated between projects.

§ 751.25 Programming and authorization.

(a) Junkyard control projects shall be programmed in accordance with the provisions of part 630, subpart A of this chapter. Such projects may include one or more junkyards.

(b) Authorization to proceed with a junkyard control project may be given when the State submits a written request to FHWA which includes the following:

(1) The zoning and validation of the legal status of each junkyard on the project;

(2) The control measures proposed for each junkyard including, where applicable, information relative to permanent disposal sites to be acquired by the State;

(3) The real property interest to be acquired in order to implement the control measures;

(4) Plans or graphic displays indicating the location of the junkyard relative to the highway, the 1,000 foot control lines, property ownership boundaries, the general location of the junk or scrap material, and any buildings, structures, or improvement involved; and

(5) Where screening is to be utilized, the type of screening, and adequately detailed plans and cross sections, or other adequate graphic displays which illustrate the relationship of the motorist, the screen, and the material to be screened at critical points of view.

[40 FR 8551, Feb. 28, 1975, as amended at 41 FR 9321, Mar. 4, 1976]

PART 752—LANDSCAPE AND ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 131, 315, 319; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; 49 CFR 1.48(b), unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 43 FR 19390, May 5, 1978, unless otherwise noted.

§ 752.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to furnish guidelines and prescribe policies regarding landscaping and scenic enhancement programs, safety rest areas, and scenic overlooks under 23 U.S.C. 319; information centers and systems

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under 23 U.S.C. 131(i); and vending machines in safety rest areas under 23 U.S.C. 111.

[48 FR 38610, Aug. 25, 1983]

§ 752.2 Policy.

(a) Highway esthetics is a most important consideration in the Federal-aid highway program. Highways must not only blend with our natural social, and cultural environment, but also provide pleasure and satisfaction in their use.

(b) The FHWA will cooperate with State and local agencies and organizations to provide opportunities for the display of original works of art within the highway rights-of-way.

(c) The development of the roadside to include landscape development, safety rest areas, and the preservation of valuable adjacent scenic lands is a necessary component of highway development. Planning and development of the roadside should be concurrent with or closely follow that of the highway. Further, the development of travel information centers and systems is encouraged as an effective method of providing necessary information to the traveling public.

§ 752.3 Definitions.

(a) *Safety rest area.* A roadside facility safely removed from the traveled way with parking and such facilities for the motorist deemed necessary for his rest, relaxation, comfort and information needs. The term is synonymous with "rest and recreation areas."

(b) *Scenic overlook.* A roadside improvement for parking and other facilities to provide the motorist with a safe opportunity to stop and enjoy a view.

(c) *Information centers.* Facilities located at safety rest areas which provide information of interest to the traveling public.

(d) *Information systems.* Facilities located within the right-of-way which provide information of interest to the traveling public. An information system is not a sign, display or device otherwise permitted under 23 U.S.C. 131 or prohibited by any local, State or Federal law or regulation.

(e) *Landscape project.* Any action taken as part of a highway construction project or as a separate action to

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enhance the esthetics of a highway through the placement of plant materials consistent with a landscape design plan. Seeding undertaken for erosion control and planting vegetation for screening purposes shall not constitute a landscaping project.

[43 FR 19390, May 5, 1978, as amended at 52 FR 34638, Sept. 14, 1987]

§ 752.4 Landscape development.

(a) Landscape development, *which includes landscaping projects and other highway planting programs* within the right-of-way of all federally funded highways or on adjoining scenic lands, shall be in general conformity with accepted concepts and principles of highway landscaping and environmental design.

(b) *Landscape development* should have provisions for plant establishment periods of a duration sufficient for expected survival in the highway environment. Normal 1-year plant establishment periods may be extended to 3-year periods where survival is considered essential to their function, such as junkyard screening or urban landscaping projects.

(c) In urban areas new and major reconstructed highways and completed Interstate and expressway sections are to be landscaped as appropriate for the adjacent existing or planned environment.

(d) In rural areas new and major reconstructed highways should be landscaped as appropriate for the adjacent environment. Planning should include the opportunity for natural regeneration of native growth and the management of that growth.

(e) Landscaping projects shall include the planting of native wildflower seeds or seedlings or both, unless a waiver is granted as provided in § 752.11(b).

[43 FR 19390, May 5, 1978, as amended at 52 FR 34638, Sept. 14, 1987]

§ 752.5 Safety rest areas.

(a) Safety rest areas should provide facilities reasonably necessary for the comfort, convenience, relaxation, and information needs of the motorist. Caretakers' quarters may be provided in conjunction with a safety rest area

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at such locations where accommodations are deemed necessary. All facilities within the rest area are to provide full consideration and accommodation for the handicapped.

(b) The State may permit the placement of vending machines in existing or new safety rest areas located on the rights-of-way of the Interstate system for the purpose of dispensing such food, drink, or other articles as the State determines are appropriate and desirable, except that the dispensing by any means, of petroleum products or motor vehicle replacement parts shall not be allowed. Such vending machines shall be operated by the State.

(c) The State may operate the vending machines directly or may contract with a vendor for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the vending machines. In permitting the placement of vending machines the State shall give priority to vending machines which are operated through the State licensing agency designated pursuant to section 2(a)(5) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act, U.S.C. 107(a)(5).

(d) Access from the safety rest areas to adjacent publicly owned conservation and recreation areas may be permitted if access to these areas is only available through the rest area and if these areas or their usage does not adversely affect the facilities of the safety rest area.

(e) The scenic quality of the site, its accessibility and adaptability, and the availability of utilities are the prime considerations in the selection of rest area sites. A statewide safety rest area system plan should be maintained. This plan should include development priorities to ensure safety rest areas will be constructed first at locations most needed by the motorist. Proposals for safety rest areas or similar facilities on Federal-aid highways in suburban or urban areas shall be special case and must be fully justified before being authorized by the FHWA Regional Administrator.

(f) Facilities within newly constructed safety rest areas should meet the forecast needs of the design year. Expansion and modernization of older existing rest areas that do not provide adequate service should be considered.

(g) No charge to the public may be made for goods and services at safety rest areas except for telephone and articles dispensed by vending machines.

[43 FR 19390, May 5, 1978, as amended at 48 FR 38611, Aug. 25, 1983]

§ 752.6 Scenic overlooks.

Scenic overlooks shall be located and designed as appropriate to the site and the scenic view with consideration for safety, access, and convenience of the motorist. Scenic overlooks may provide facilities equivalent to those provided in safety rest area.

§ 752.7 Information centers and systems.

(a) The State may establish at existing or new safety rest areas information centers for the purpose of providing specific information to the motorist as to services, as to places of interest within the State and such other information as the State may consider desirable.

(b) The State may construct and operate the facilities, may construct and lease the operation of information facilities, or may lease the construction and operation of information facilities.

(c) Where the information center or system includes an enclosed building, the identification of the operator and all advertising must be restricted to the interior of the building. Where a facility is in the nature of a bulletin board or partial enclosure, none of the advertising, including the trade name, logo, or symbol of the operator shall be legible from the main traveled way.

(d) Subject to FHWA approval, States may establish or permit information systems within the right-of-way of federally funded highways which provide information of specific interest to the traveling public which do not visually intrude upon the main-traveled way of the highway in a manner violating 23 U.S.C. 131 and other applicable local, State, and Federal laws, rules, and regulations.

§ 752.8 Privately operated information centers and systems.

(a) Subject to the FHWA Regional Administrator's approval of the lease or agreement, the State may permit privately operated information centers

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and systems which conform with the standards of this directive.

(b) There shall be no violation of control of access, and no adverse effect on traffic in the main traveled way.

(c) The agreement between the State and the private operator shall provide that:

(1) The State shall have title to the information center or system upon completion of construction or termination of the lease.

(2) Advertising must be limited to matters relating to and of interest to the traveling public.

(3) Equal access must be provided at reasonable rates to all advertisers considered qualified by the State.

(4) Forty percent or more of all display areas and audible communications shall be devoted free of charge to providing information to the traveling public and public service announcements.

(5) No charge to the public may be made for goods or services except telephone and articles dispensed by vending machines.

(6) Nondiscrimination provisions must be included in accordance with the State assurance with regard to 42 U.S.C. 2000d—2000d-5 (Civil Rights Act of 1964). The private operator may not permit advertising from advertisers who do not provide their services without regard to race, color, or national origin.

(7) The center or system shall be adequately maintained and kept clean and sanitary.

(8) The State may promulgate reasonable rules and regulations on the conduct of the information center or system in the interests of the public.

(9) The State may terminate the lease or agreement for violation of its terms or for other cause.

[43 FR 19390, May 5, 1978, as amended at 48 FR 38611, Aug. 25, 1983]

§ 752.9 Scenic lands.

(a) Acquisition of interests in and improvement of strips of land or water areas adjacent to Federal-aid highways may be made as necessary for restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty.

(b) Scenic strip interests may be acquired in urban or rural areas, com-

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bined in one or more projects, authorized separately whether or not there is or has been a Federal-aid project on the adjoining Federal-aid highway.

(c) Approval of acquisition and development of scenic strips on completed Interstate should be conditioned on a showing that the acquisition of scenic strips was considered under the Highway Beautification Program for that particular section of Interstate.

§ 752.10 Abandoned vehicles.

(a) Abandoned motor vehicles may be removed from the right-of-way and from private lands adjacent to Federal-aid highways for the restoration, preservation, or enhancement of scenic beauty as seen from the traveled way of the highway as a landscape or roadside development project.

(b) The State shall obtain permission or sufficient legal authority to go on private land to carry out this program. Where feasible, an agreement should be made with the owner that he will not in the future place junk, or allow junk to be placed, on his land so as to create an eyesore to the traveling public. The permission or authority and the agreement may be informal.

(c) The collection of abandoned motor vehicles from within the right-of-way must be a development project and not a maintenance operation. Once a State completes a development project for the removal of abandoned motor vehicles from within the highway right-of-way, it is obligated to continue the removal of future abandoned motor vehicles from within the development project limits without further participation.

§ 752.11 Federal participation.

(a) Federal-aid highway funds, but generally excluding Interstate construction funds, are available for landscape development; for the acquisition and development of safety rest areas, scenic overlooks, and scenic lands; for the development of information centers and systems; and for the removal of abandoned motor vehicles.

(b) Federal-aid highway funds may participate in any landscaping project undertaken pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section provided that at least

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one-quarter of one percent of funds expended for such landscaping project is used to plant native wildflower seeds or seedlings or both. The Administrator may, upon the request of a State highway agency, grant a waiver to this requirement provided the State certifies that:

(1) Native wildflowers or seedlings cannot be grown satisfactorily; or

(2) There is a scarcity of available planting areas; or

(3) The available planting areas will be used for agricultural purposes.

(c) Subject to the requirement of paragraph (b) of this section, Federal-aid highway funds may participate in plant establishment periods in or associated with landscape development.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, Federal-aid highway funds may participate in the planting of flowering materials, including native wildflowers, donated by garden clubs and other organizations or individuals.

(e) The value of donated plant materials shall not count toward the one-quarter of one percent minimum expenditure required by paragraph (b) of this section.

(f) Federal-aid funds may not be used for assemblage, printing, or distribution of information materials; for temporary or portable information facilities; or for installation, operation, or maintenance of vending machines.

[52 FR 34638, Sept. 14, 1987]

PART 771—ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND RELATED PROCEDURES

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; 23 U.S.C. 106, 109, 128, 138, 139, 315, 325, 326, and 327; 49 U.S.C. 303, 5301(e), 5323(b), and 5324; Pub. L. 109-59, 119 Stat. 1144, sections 6002 and 6010; 40 CFR parts 1500-1508; 49 CFR 1.48(b) and 1.51.

SOURCE: 52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

§ 771.101 Purpose.

This regulation prescribes the policies and procedures of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA), and supplements the NEPA regulation of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508 (CEQ regulation). Together these regulations set forth all FHWA, FTA, and Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements under NEPA for the processing of highway and public transportation projects. This regulation also sets forth procedures to comply with 23 U.S.C. 109(h), 128, 138, 139, 325, 326, 327, and 49 U.S.C. 303, 5301(e), 5323(b), and 5324(b) and (c).

[74 FR 12527, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.103 [Reserved]

§ 771.105 Policy.

It is the policy of the Administration that:

(a) To the fullest extent possible, all environmental investigations, reviews, and consultations be coordinated as a single process, and compliance with all applicable environmental requirements be reflected in the environmental review document required by this regulation.¹

¹FHWA and FTA have supplementary guidance on environmental review documents and procedures for their programs. This guidance includes: the FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A, October 30, 1987;

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(b) Alternative courses of action be evaluated and decisions be made in the best overall public interest based upon a balanced consideration of the need for safe and efficient transportation; of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed transportation improvement; and of national, State, and local environmental protection goals.

(c) Public involvement and a systematic interdisciplinary approach be essential parts of the development process for proposed actions.

(d) Measures necessary to mitigate adverse impacts be incorporated into the action. Measures necessary to mitigate adverse impacts are eligible for Federal funding when the Administration determines that:

(1) The impacts for which the mitigation is proposed actually result from the Administration action; and

(2) The proposed mitigation represents a reasonable public expenditure after considering the impacts of the action and the benefits of the proposed mitigation measures. In making this determination, the Administration will consider, among other factors, the extent to which the proposed measures would assist in complying with a Federal statute, Executive Order, or Administration regulation or policy.

(e) Costs incurred by the applicant for the preparation of environmental documents requested by the Administration be eligible for Federal assistance.

(f) No person, because of handicap, age, race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, or denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any Administration program or procedural activity re-

quired by or developed pursuant to this regulation.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987; 53 FR 11065, Apr. 5, 1988, as amended at 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12527, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.107 Definitions.

The definitions contained in the CEQ regulation and in Titles 23 and 49 of the United States Code are applicable. In addition, the following definitions apply.

(a) *Environmental studies*. The investigations of potential environmental impacts to determine the environmental process to be followed and to assist in the preparation of the environmental document.

(b) *Action*. A highway or transit project proposed for FHWA or FTA funding. It also includes activities such as joint and multiple use permits, changes in access control, etc., which may or may not involve a commitment of Federal funds.

(c) *Administration action*. The approval by FHWA or FTA of the applicant's request for Federal funds for construction. It also includes approval of activities such as joint and multiple use permits, changes in access control, etc., which may or may not involve a commitment of Federal funds.

(d) *Administration*. The FHWA or FTA, whichever is the designated Federal lead agency for the proposed action. A reference herein to the Administration means the State when the State is functioning as the FHWA or FTA in carrying out responsibilities delegated or assigned to the State in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 325, 326, or 327, or other applicable law.

(e) *Section 4(f)*. Refers to 49 U.S.C. 303 and 23 U.S.C. 138.²

²“SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process: Final Guidance,” November 15, 2006; Appendix A to 23 CFR part 450 titled “Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes”; and “Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment,” May 2006. The FHWA and the FTA supplementary guidance, and any updated versions of the guidance, are available from the respective FHWA and FTA headquarters and field offices as prescribed in 49 CFR part 7 and on their respective Web sites at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov> and <http://www.fta.dot.gov>, or in hard copy by request.

²Section 4(f), which protected certain public lands and all historic sites, technically was repealed in 1983 when it was codified, without substantive change, as 49 U.S.C. 303. This regulation continues to refer to section 4(f) because it would create needless confusion to do otherwise; the policies section 4(f) engendered are widely referred to as “section 4(f)” matters. A provision with the same meaning is found at 23 U.S.C. 138 and applies only to FHWA actions.

(f) *Applicant.* Any State, local, or federally-recognized Indian tribal governmental unit that requests funding approval or other action by the Administration and that the Administration works with to conduct environmental studies and prepare environmental review documents. When another Federal agency, or the Administration itself, is implementing the action, then the lead agencies (as defined in this regulation) may assume the responsibilities of the applicant in this part. If there is no applicant, then the Federal lead agency will assume the responsibilities of the applicant in this part.

(g) *Lead agencies.* The Administration and any other agency designated to serve as a joint lead agency with the Administration under 23 U.S.C. 139(c)(3) or under the CEQ regulation.

(h) *Participating agency.* A Federal, State, local, or federally-recognized Indian tribal governmental unit that may have an interest in the proposed project and has accepted an invitation to be a participating agency, or, in the case of a Federal agency, has not declined the invitation in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139(d)(3).

(i) *Project sponsor.* The Federal, State, local, or federally-recognized Indian tribal governmental unit, or other entity, including any private or public-private entity that seeks an Administration action.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12527, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.109 Applicability and responsibilities.

(a)(1) The provisions of this regulation and the CEQ regulation apply to actions where the Administration exercises sufficient control to condition the permit or project approval. Actions taken by the applicant which do not require Federal approvals, such as preparation of a regional transportation plan are not subject to this regulation.

(2) This regulation does not apply to, or alter approvals by the Administration made prior to the effective date of this regulation.

(3) Environmental documents accepted or prepared after the effective date of this regulation shall be developed in accordance with this regulation.

(b) It shall be the responsibility of the applicant, in cooperation with the Administration to implement those mitigation measures stated as commitments in the environmental documents prepared pursuant to this regulation. The FHWA will assure that this is accomplished as a part of its program management responsibilities that include reviews of designs, plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E), and construction inspections. The FTA will assure implementation of committed mitigation measures through incorporation by reference in the grant agreement, followed by reviews of designs and construction inspections.

(c) The following roles and responsibilities apply during the environmental review process:

(1) The lead agencies are responsible for managing the environmental review process and the preparation of the appropriate environmental review documents.

(2) Any applicant that is a State or local governmental entity that is, or is expected to be, a direct recipient of funds under title 23, U.S. Code, or chapter 53 of title 49 U.S. Code, for the action shall serve as a joint lead agency with the Administration in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139, and may prepare environmental review documents if the Administration furnishes guidance and independently evaluates the documents.

(3) The Administration may invite other Federal, State, local, or federally-recognized Indian tribal governmental units to serve as joint lead agencies in accordance with the CEQ regulation. If the applicant is serving as a joint lead agency under 23 U.S.C. 139(c)(3), then the Administration and the applicant will decide jointly which other agencies to invite to serve as joint lead agencies.

(4) When the applicant seeks an Administration action other than the approval of funds, the role of the applicant will be determined by the Administration in accordance with the CEQ regulation and 23 U.S.C. 139.

(5) Regardless of its role under paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(4) of this section, a public agency that has statewide jurisdiction (for example, a State highway agency or a State department

of transportation) or a local unit of government acting through a statewide agency, that meets the requirements of section 102(2)(D) of NEPA, may prepare the EIS and other environmental review documents with the Administration furnishing guidance, participating in the preparation, and independently evaluating the document. All FHWA applicants qualify under this paragraph.

(6) The role of a project sponsor that is a private institution or firm is limited to providing technical studies and commenting on environmental review documents.

(d) When entering into Federal-aid project agreements pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 106, it shall be the responsibility of the State highway agency to ensure that the project is constructed in accordance with and incorporates all committed environmental impact mitigation measures listed in approved environmental review documents unless the State requests and receives written FHWA approval to modify or delete such mitigation features.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987; 53 FR 11065, Apr. 5, 1988, as amended at 62 FR 6873, Feb. 14, 1997; 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12527, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.111 Early coordination, public involvement, and project development.

(a)(1) Early coordination with appropriate agencies and the public aids in determining the type of environmental review documents an action requires, the scope of the document, the level of analysis, and related environmental requirements. This involves the exchange of information from the inception of a proposal for action to preparation of the environmental review documents. Applicants intending to apply for funds should notify the Administration at the time that a project concept is identified. When requested, the Administration will advise the applicant, insofar as possible, of the probable class of action and related environmental laws and requirements and of the need for specific studies and findings which would normally be developed concurrently with the environmental review documents.

(2) The information and results produced by, or in support of, the transportation planning process may be incorporated into environmental review documents in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.21 and 23 CFR 450.212 or 450.318.³

(b) The Administration will identify the probable class of action as soon as sufficient information is available to identify the probable impacts of the action.

(c) When both the FHWA and FTA are involved in the development of a project, or when the FHWA or FTA acts as a joint lead agency with another Federal agency, a mutually acceptable process will be established on a case-by-case basis.

(d) During the early coordination process, the lead agencies may request other agencies having an interest in the action to participate, and must invite such agencies if the action is subject to the project development procedures in 23 U.S.C. 139.⁴ Agencies with special expertise may be invited to become cooperating agencies. Agencies with jurisdiction by law must be requested to become cooperating agencies.

(e) Other States, and Federal land management entities, that may be significantly affected by the action or by any of the alternatives shall be notified early and their views solicited by the applicant in cooperation with the Administration. The Administration will prepare a written evaluation of any significant unresolved issues and furnish it to the applicant for incorporation into the environmental assessment (EA) or draft EIS.

(f) In order to ensure meaningful evaluation of alternatives and to avoid

³On February 14, 2007, FHWA and FTA issued guidance on incorporating products of the planning process into NEPA documents as Appendix A of 23 CFR part 450. This guidance, titled "Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes," is available on the FHWA Web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov> or in hard copy upon request.

⁴The FHWA and FTA have developed guidance on 23 U.S.C. Section 139 titled "SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process: Final Guidance," November 15, 2006, and available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov> or in hard copy upon request.

commitments to transportation improvements before they are fully evaluated, the action evaluated in each EIS or finding of no significant impact (FONSI) shall:

(1) Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;

(2) Have independent utility or independent significance, *i.e.*, be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and

(3) Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

(g) For major transportation actions, the tiering of EISs as discussed in the CEQ regulation (40 CFR 1502.20) may be appropriate. The first tier EIS would focus on broad issues such as general location, mode choice, and areawide air quality and land use implications of the major alternatives. The second tier would address site-specific details on project impacts, costs, and mitigation measures.

(h) For the Federal-aid highway program:

(1) Each State must have procedures approved by the FHWA to carry out a public involvement/public hearing program pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 128 and 139 and CEQ regulation.

(2) State public involvement/public hearing procedures must provide for:

(i) Coordination of public involvement activities and public hearings with the entire NEPA process.

(ii) Early and continuing opportunities during project development for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts, as well as impacts associated with relocation of individuals, groups, or institutions.

(iii) One or more public hearings or the opportunity for hearing(s) to be held by the State highway agency at a convenient time and place for any Federal-aid project which requires significant amounts of right-of-way, substantially changes the layout or functions of connecting roadways or of the facility being improved, has a substantial adverse impact on abutting property, otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect, or for which the FHWA determines

that a public hearing is in the public interest.

(iv) Reasonable notice to the public of either a public hearing or the opportunity for a public hearing. Such notice will indicate the availability of explanatory information. The notice shall also provide information required to comply with public involvement requirements of other laws, Executive orders, and regulations.

(v) Explanation at the public hearing of the following information, as appropriate:

(A) The project's purpose, need, and consistency with the goals and objectives of any local urban planning,

(B) The project's alternatives, and major design features,

(C) The social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project,

(D) The relocation assistance program and the right-of-way acquisition process.

(E) The State highway agency's procedures for receiving both oral and written statements from the public.

(vi) Submission to the FHWA of a transcript of each public hearing and a certification that a required hearing or hearing opportunity was offered. The transcript will be accompanied by copies of all written statements from the public, both submitted at the public hearing or during an announced period after the public hearing.

(vii) An opportunity for public involvement in defining the purpose and need and the range of alternatives, for any action subject to the project development procedures in 23 U.S.C. 139.

(viii) Public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment on a Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 303(d).⁵

(3) Based on the reevaluation of project environmental documents required by §771.129, the FHWA and the State highway agency will determine whether changes in the project or new

⁵The FHWA and FTA have developed guidance on Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact findings titled "Guidance for Determining *De Minimis* Impacts to Section 4(f) Resources," December 13, 2005, which is available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov> or in hard copy upon request.

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information warrant additional public involvement.

(4) Approvals or acceptances of public involvement/public hearing procedures prior to the publication date of this regulation remain valid.

(i) Applicants for capital assistance in the FTA program achieve public participation on proposed projects by holding public hearings and seeking input from the public through the scoping process for environmental review documents. For projects requiring EISs, an early opportunity for public involvement in defining the purpose and need for action and the range of alternatives must be provided, and a public hearing will be held during the circulation period of the draft EIS. For other projects that substantially affect the community or its public transportation service, an adequate opportunity for public review and comment must be provided, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5323(b).

(j) Information on the FTA environmental process may be obtained from: Director, Office of Human and Natural Environment, Federal Transit Administration, Washington, DC 20590. Information on the FHWA environmental process may be obtained from: Director, Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, DC 20590.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12528, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.113 Timing of Administration activities.

(a) The lead agencies, in cooperation with the applicant (if not a lead agency), will perform the work necessary to complete a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or a record of decision (ROD) and comply with other related environmental laws and regulations to the maximum extent possible during the NEPA process. This work includes environmental studies, related engineering studies, agency coordination and public involvement. However, final design activities, property acquisition, purchase of construction materials or rolling stock, or project construction shall not proceed until the following have been completed, except as other-

wise provided in law or in paragraph (d) of this section:

(1)(i) The action has been classified as a categorical exclusion (CE), or

(ii) A FONSI has been approved, or

(iii) A final EIS has been approved and available for the prescribed period of time and a record of decision has been signed;

(2) For actions proposed for FHWA funding, the Administration has received and accepted the certifications and any required public hearing transcripts required by 23 U.S.C. 128;

(3) For activities proposed for FHWA funding, the programming requirements of 23 CFR part 450, subpart B, and 23 CFR part 630, subpart A, have been met.

(b) Completion of the requirements set forth in paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section is considered acceptance of the general project location and concepts described in the environmental review documents unless otherwise specified by the approving official.

(c) Letters of Intent issued under the authority of 49 U.S.C. 5309(g) are used by FTA to indicate an intention to obligate future funds for multi-year capital transit projects. Letters of Intent will not be issued by FTA until the NEPA process is completed.

(d) The prohibition in paragraph (a)(1) of this section is limited by the following exceptions:

(1) Exceptions for hardship and protective acquisitions of real property are addressed in paragraph (d)(12) of § 771.117.

(2) Paragraph (d)(13) of § 771.117 contains an exception for the acquisition of pre-existing railroad right-of-way for future transit use in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 5324(c).

(3) FHWA regulations at 23 CFR 710.503 establish conditions for FHWA approval of Federal-aid highway funding for hardship and protective acquisitions.

(4) FHWA regulations at 23 CFR 710.501 address early acquisition of right-of-way by a State prior to the execution of a project agreement with the FHWA or completion of NEPA. In paragraphs (b) and (c) of § 710.501, the regulation establishes conditions governing subsequent requests for Federal-

aid credit or reimbursement for the acquisition. Any State-funded early acquisition for a Federal-aid highway project where there will not be Federal-aid highway credit or reimbursement for the early acquisition is subject to the limitations described in the CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1506.1 and other applicable Federal requirements.

(5) A limited exception for rolling stock is provided in 49 U.S.C. 5309(h)(6).

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987; 53 FR 11066, Apr. 5, 1988, as amended at 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12528, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.115 Classes of actions.

There are three classes of actions which prescribe the level of documentation required in the NEPA process.

(a) *Class I (EISs)*. Actions that significantly affect the environment require an EIS (40 CFR 1508.27). The following are examples of actions that normally required an EIS:

- (1) A new controlled access freeway.
- (2) A highway project of four or more lanes on a new location.
- (3) New construction or extension of fixed rail transit facilities (e.g., rapid rail, light rail, commuter rail, automated guideway transit).
- (4) New construction or extension of a separate roadway for buses or high occupancy vehicles not located within an existing highway facility.

(b) *Class II (CEs)*. Actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental effect are excluded from the requirement to prepare an EA or EIS. A specific list of CEs normally not requiring NEPA documentation is set forth in § 771.117(c). When appropriately documented, additional projects may also qualify as CEs pursuant to § 771.117(d).

(c) *Class III (EAs)*. Actions in which the significance of the environmental impact is not clearly established. All actions that are not Class I or II are Class III. All actions in this class require the preparation of an EA to determine the appropriate environmental document required.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 74 FR 12529, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.117 Categorical exclusions.

(a) Categorical exclusions (CEs) are actions which meet the definition contained in 40 CFR 1508.4, and, based on past experience with similar actions, do not involve significant environmental impacts. They are actions which: do not induce significant impacts to planned growth or land use for the area; do not require the relocation of significant numbers of people; do not have a significant impact on any natural, cultural, recreational, historic or other resource; do not involve significant air, noise, or water quality impacts; do not have significant impacts on travel patterns; or do not otherwise, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts.

(b) Any action which normally would be classified as a CE but could involve unusual circumstances will require the Administration, in cooperation with the applicant, to conduct appropriate environmental studies to determine if the CE classification is proper. Such unusual circumstances include:

- (1) Significant environmental impacts;
- (2) Substantial controversy on environmental grounds;
- (3) Significant impact on properties protected by section 4(f) of the DOT Act or section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; or
- (4) Inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local law, requirement or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action.

(c) The following actions meet the criteria for CEs in the CEQ regulation (section 1508.4) and § 771.117(a) of this regulation and normally do not require any further NEPA approvals by the Administration:

- (1) Activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as planning and research activities; grants for training; engineering to define the elements of a proposed action or alternatives so that social, economic, and environmental effects can be assessed; and Federal-aid system revisions which establish classes of highways on the Federal-aid highway system.

(2) Approval of utility installations along or across a transportation facility.

(3) Construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities.

(4) Activities included in the State's *highway safety plan* under 23 U.S.C. 402.

(5) Transfer of Federal lands pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 107(d) and/or 23 U.S.C. 317 when the land transfer is in support of an action that is not otherwise subject to FHWA review under NEPA.

(6) The installation of noise barriers or alterations to existing publicly owned buildings to provide for noise reduction.

(7) Landscaping.

(8) Installation of fencing, signs, pavement markings, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, and railroad warning devices where no substantial land acquisition or traffic disruption will occur.

(9) Emergency repairs under 23 U.S.C. 125.

(10) Acquisition of scenic easements.

(11) Determination of payback under 23 U.S.C. 156 for property previously acquired with Federal-aid participation.

(12) Improvements to existing rest areas and truck weigh stations.

(13) Ridesharing activities.

(14) Bus and rail car rehabilitation.

(15) Alterations to facilities or vehicles in order to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons.

(16) Program administration, technical assistance activities, and operating assistance to transit authorities to continue existing service or increase service to meet routine changes in demand.

(17) The purchase of vehicles by the applicant where the use of these vehicles can be accommodated by existing facilities or by new facilities which themselves are within a CE.

(18) Track and railbed maintenance and improvements when carried out within the existing right-of-way.

(19) Purchase and installation of operating or maintenance equipment to be located within the transit facility and with no significant impacts off the site.

(20) Promulgation of rules, regulations, and directives.

(21) Deployment of electronics, photonics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination, or as components of a fully integrated system, to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system or to enhance security or passenger convenience. Examples include, but are not limited to, traffic control and detector devices, lane management systems, electronic payment equipment, automatic vehicle locaters, automated passenger counters, computer-aided dispatching systems, radio communications systems, dynamic message signs, and security equipment including surveillance and detection cameras on roadways and in transit facilities and on buses.

(d) Additional actions which meet the criteria for a CE in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.4) and paragraph (a) of this section may be designated as CEs only after Administration approval. The applicant shall submit documentation which demonstrates that the specific conditions or criteria for these CEs are satisfied and that significant environmental effects will not result. Examples of such actions include but are not limited to:

(1) Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (e.g., parking, weaving, turning, climbing).

(2) Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects including the installation of ramp metering control devices and lighting.

(3) Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings.

(4) Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities.

(5) Construction of new truck weigh stations or rest areas.

(6) Approvals for disposal of excess right-of-way or for joint or limited use of right-of-way, where the proposed use does not have significant adverse impacts.

(7) Approvals for changes in access control.

(8) Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with

existing zoning and located on or near a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated bus and support vehicle traffic.

(9) Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities where only minor amounts of additional land are required and there is not a substantial increase in the number of users.

(10) Construction of bus transfer facilities (an open area consisting of passenger shelters, boarding areas, kiosks and related street improvements) when located in a commercial area or other high activity street center in which there is adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic.

(11) Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and where there is no significant noise impact on the surrounding community.

(12) Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes. Hardship and protective buying will be permitted only for a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels. These types of land acquisition qualify for a CE only where the acquisition will not limit the evaluation of alternatives, including shifts in alignment for planned construction projects, which may be required in the NEPA process. No project development on such land may proceed until the NEPA process has been completed.

(i) Hardship acquisition is early acquisition of property by the applicant at the property owner's request to alleviate particular hardship to the owner, in contrast to others, because of an inability to sell his property. This is justified when the property owner can document on the basis of health, safety or financial reasons that remaining in the property poses an undue hardship compared to others.

(ii) Protective acquisition is done to prevent imminent development of a parcel which may be needed for a proposed transportation corridor or site. Documentation must clearly demonstrate that development of the land would preclude future transportation use and that such development is imminent. Advance acquisition is not per-

mitted for the sole purpose of reducing the cost of property for a proposed project.

(13) Acquisition of pre-existing railroad right-of-way pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5324(c). No project development on the acquired railroad right-of-way may proceed until the NEPA process for such project development, including the consideration of alternatives, has been completed.

(e) Where a pattern emerges of granting CE status for a particular type of action, the Administration will initiate rulemaking proposing to add this type of action to the list of categorical exclusions in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, as appropriate.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987; 53 FR 11066, Apr. 5, 1988, as amended at 70 FR 24469, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12529, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.119 Environmental assessments.

(a) An EA shall be prepared by the applicant in consultation with the Administration for each action that is not a CE and does not clearly require the preparation of an EIS, or where the Administration believes an EA would assist in determining the need for an EIS.

(b) For actions that require an EA, the applicant, in consultation with the Administration, shall, at the earliest appropriate time, begin consultation with interested agencies and others to advise them of the scope of the project and to achieve the following objectives: determine which aspects of the proposed action have potential for social, economic, or environmental impact; identify alternatives and measures which might mitigate adverse environmental impacts; and identify other environmental review and consultation requirements which should be performed concurrently with the EA. The applicant shall accomplish this through an early coordination process (*i.e.*, procedures under § 771.111) or through a scoping process. Public involvement shall be summarized and the results of agency coordination shall be included in the EA.

(c) The EA is subject to Administration approval before it is made available to the public as an Administration document.

(d) The EA need not be circulated for comment but the document must be

made available for public inspection at the applicant's office and at the appropriate Administration field offices in accordance with paragraphs (e) and (f) of this section. Notice of availability of the EA, briefly describing the action and its impacts, shall be sent by the applicant to the affected units of Federal, State and local government. Notice shall also be sent to the State intergovernmental review contacts established under Executive Order 12372.

(e) When a public hearing is held as part of the application for Federal funds, the EA shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The notice of the public hearing in local newspapers shall announce the availability of the EA and where it may be obtained or reviewed. Comments shall be submitted in writing to the applicant or the Administration within 30 days of the availability of the EA unless the Administration determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted. Public hearing requirements are as described in § 771.111.

(f) When a public hearing is not held, the applicant shall place a notice in a newspaper(s) similar to a public hearing notice and at a similar stage of development of the action, advising the public of the availability of the EA and where information concerning the action may be obtained. The notice shall invite comments from all interested parties. Comments shall be submitted in writing to the applicant or the Administration within 30 days of the publication of the notice unless the Administration determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted.

(g) If no significant impacts are identified, the applicant shall furnish the Administration a copy of the revised EA, as appropriate; the public hearing transcript, where applicable; copies of any comments received and responses thereto; and recommend a FONSI. The EA should also document compliance, to the extent possible, with all applicable environmental laws and Executive orders, or provide reasonable assurance that their requirements can be met.

(h) When the Administration expects to issue a FONSI for an action described in § 771.115(a), copies of the EA

shall be made available for public review (including the affected units of government) for a minimum of 30 days before the Administration makes its final decision (See 40 CFR 1501.4(e)(2).) This public availability shall be announced by a notice similar to a public hearing notice.

(i) If, at any point in the EA process, the Administration determines that the action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, the preparation of an EIS will be required.

(j) If the Administration decides to apply 23 U.S.C. 139 to an action involving an EA, then the EA shall be prepared in accordance with the applicable provisions of that statute.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24470, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12529, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.121 Findings of no significant impact.

(a) The Administration will review the EA and any public hearing comments and other comments received regarding the EA. If the Administration agrees with the applicant's recommendations pursuant to § 771.119(g), it will make a separate written FONSI incorporating by reference the EA and any other appropriate environmental documents.

(b) After a FONSI has been made by the Administration, a notice of availability of the FONSI shall be sent by the applicant to the affected units of Federal, State and local government and the document shall be available from the applicant and the Administration upon request by the public. Notice shall also be sent to the State intergovernmental review contacts established under Executive Order 12372.

(c) If another Federal agency has issued a FONSI on an action which includes an element proposed for Administration funding, the Administration will evaluate the other agency's FONSI. If the Administration determines that this element of the project and its environmental impacts have been adequately identified and assessed, and concurs in the decision to issue a FONSI, the Administration will issue its own FONSI incorporating the other agency's FONSI. If environmental issues have not been adequately

identified and assessed, the Administration will require appropriate environmental studies.

§ 771.123 Draft environmental impact statements.

(a) A draft EIS shall be prepared when the Administration determines that the action is likely to cause significant impacts on the environment. When the applicant, after consultation with any project sponsor that is not the applicant, has notified the Administration in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139(e) and the decision has been made by the Administration to prepare an EIS, the Administration will issue a Notice of Intent (40 CFR 1508.22) for publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Applicants are encouraged to announce the intent to prepare an EIS by appropriate means at the local level.

(b) After publication of the Notice of Intent, the lead agencies, in cooperation with the applicant (if not a lead agency), will begin a scoping process which may take into account any planning work already accomplished, in accordance with 23 CFR 450.212 or 450.318. The scoping process will be used to identify the purpose and need, the range of alternatives and impacts, and the significant issues to be addressed in the EIS and to achieve the other objectives of 40 CFR 1501.7. For the FHWA, scoping is normally achieved through public and agency involvement procedures required by § 771.111. For FTA, scoping is achieved by soliciting agency and public responses to the action by letter or by holding scoping meetings. If a scoping meeting is to be held, it should be announced in the Administration's Notice of Intent and by appropriate means at the local level.

(c) The draft EIS shall be prepared by the lead agencies, in cooperation with the applicant (if not a lead agency). The draft EIS shall evaluate all reasonable alternatives to the action and discuss the reasons why other alternatives, which may have been considered, were eliminated from detailed study. The draft EIS shall also summarize the studies, reviews, consultations, and coordination required by environmental laws or Executive Orders to the extent appropriate at this stage in the environmental process.

(d) Any of the lead agencies may select a consultant to assist in the preparation of an EIS in accordance with applicable contracting procedures and with 40 CFR 1506.5(c).

(e) The Administration, when satisfied that the draft EIS complies with NEPA requirements, will approve the draft EIS for circulation by signing and dating the cover sheet.

(f) A lead, joint lead, or a cooperating agency shall be responsible for printing the EIS. The initial printing of the draft EIS shall be in sufficient quantity to meet requirements for copies which can reasonably be expected from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Normally, copies will be furnished free of charge. However, with Administration concurrence, the party requesting the draft EIS may be charged a fee which is not more than the actual cost of reproducing the copy or may be directed to the nearest location where the statement may be reviewed.

(g) The draft EIS shall be circulated for comment by the applicant on behalf of the Administration. The draft EIS shall be made available to the public and transmitted to agencies for comment no later than the time the document is filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.9. The draft EIS shall be transmitted to:

(1) Public officials, interest groups, and members of the public known to have an interest in the proposed action or the draft EIS;

(2) Federal, State and local government agencies expected to have jurisdiction or responsibility over, or interest or expertise in, the action. Copies shall be provided directly to appropriate State and local agencies, and to the State intergovernmental review contacts established under Executive Order 12372; and

(3) States and Federal land management entities which may be significantly affected by the proposed action or any of the alternatives. These copies shall be accompanied by a request that such State or entity advise the Administration in writing of any disagreement with the evaluation of impacts in the statement. The Administration will furnish the comments received to

the applicant along with a written assessment of any disagreements for incorporation into the final EIS.

(h) The FTA requires a public hearing during the circulation period of all draft EISs. FHWA public hearing requirements are as described in § 771.111(h). Whenever a public hearing is held, the draft EIS shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing. The availability of the draft EIS shall be mentioned, and public comments requested, in any public hearing notice and at any public hearing presentation. If a public hearing on an action proposed for FHWA funding is not held, a notice shall be placed in a newspaper similar to a public hearing notice advising where the draft EIS is available for review, how copies may be obtained, and where the comments should be sent.

(i) The FEDERAL REGISTER public availability notice (40 CFR 1506.10) shall establish a period of not fewer than 45 days nor more than 60 days for the return of comments on the draft EIS unless a different period is established in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 139(g)(2)(A). The notice and the draft EIS transmittal letter shall identify where comments are to be sent.

(j) For major new fixed guideway capital projects proposed for FTA funding, FTA may give approval to begin preliminary engineering on the principal alternative(s) under consideration after circulation of a draft EIS and consideration of comments received. During the course of such preliminary engineering, the applicant will refine project costs, effectiveness, and impact information with particular attention to alternative designs, operations, detailed location decisions and appropriate mitigation measures. These studies will be used to prepare the final EIS or, where appropriate, a supplemental draft EIS.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24470, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12529, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.125 Final environmental impact statements.

(a)(1) After circulation of a draft EIS and consideration of comments received, a final EIS shall be prepared by

the lead agencies, in cooperation with the applicant (if not a lead agency). The final EIS shall identify the preferred alternative and evaluate all reasonable alternatives considered. It shall also discuss substantive comments received on the draft EIS and responses thereto, summarize public involvement, and describe the mitigation measures that are to be incorporated into the proposed action. Mitigation measures presented as commitments in the final EIS will be incorporated into the project as specified in paragraphs (b) and (d) of § 771.109. The final EIS should also document compliance, to the extent possible, with all applicable environmental laws and Executive Orders, or provide reasonable assurance that their requirements can be met.

(2) Every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve interagency disagreements on actions before processing the final EIS. If significant issues remain unresolved, the final EIS shall identify those issues and the consultations and other efforts made to resolve them.

(b) The final EIS will be reviewed for legal sufficiency prior to Administration approval.

(c) The Administration will indicate approval of the EIS for an action by signing and dating the cover page. Final EISs prepared for actions in the following categories will be submitted to the Administration's Headquarters for prior concurrence:

(1) Any action for which the Administration determines that the final EIS should be reviewed at the Headquarters office. This would typically occur when the Headquarters office determines that (i) additional coordination with other Federal, State or local governmental agencies is needed; (ii) the social, economic, or environmental impacts of the action may need to be more fully explored; (iii) the impacts of the proposed action are unusually great; (iv) major issues remain unresolved; or (v) the action involves national policy issues.

(2) Any action to which a Federal, State or local government agency has indicated opposition on environmental grounds (which has not been resolved to the written satisfaction of the objecting agency).

(d) The signature of the FTA approving official on the cover sheet also indicates compliance with 49 U.S.C. 5324(b) and fulfillment of the grant application requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5323(b).

(e) Approval of the final EIS is not an Administration action as defined in paragraph (c) of § 771.107 and does not commit the Administration to approve any future grant request to fund the preferred alternative.

(f) The initial printing of the final EIS shall be in sufficient quantity to meet the request for copies which can be reasonably expected from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Normally, copies will be furnished free of charge. However, with Administration concurrence, the party requesting the final EIS may be charged a fee which is not more than the actual cost of reproducing the copy or may be directed to the nearest location where the statement may be reviewed.

(g) The final EIS shall be transmitted to any persons, organizations, or agencies that made substantive comments on the draft EIS or requested a copy, no later than the time the document is filed with EPA. In the case of lengthy documents, the agency may provide alternative circulation processes in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.19. The applicant shall also publish a notice of availability in local newspapers and make the final EIS available through the mechanism established pursuant to DOT Order 4600.13 which implements Executive Order 12372. When filed with EPA, the final EIS shall be available for public review at the applicant's offices and at appropriate Administration offices. A copy should also be made available for public review at institutions such as local government offices, libraries, and schools, as appropriate.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24470, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.127 Record of decision.

(a) The Administration will complete and sign a ROD no sooner than 30 days after publication of the final EIS notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER or 90 days after publication of a notice for the draft EIS, whichever is later. The

ROD will present the basis for the decision as specified in 40 CFR 1505.2, summarize any mitigation measures that will be incorporated in the project and document any required Section 4(f) approval in accordance with part 774 of this title. Until any required ROD has been signed, no further approvals may be given except for administrative activities taken to secure further project funding and other activities consistent with 40 CFR 1506.1.

(b) If the Administration subsequently wishes to approve an alternative which was not identified as the preferred alternative but was fully evaluated in the final EIS, or proposes to make substantial changes to the mitigation measures or findings discussed in the ROD, a revised ROD shall be subject to review by those Administration offices which reviewed the final EIS under § 771.125(c). To the extent practicable the approved revised ROD shall be provided to all persons, organizations, and agencies that received a copy of the final EIS pursuant to § 771.125(g).

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 73 FR 13395, Mar. 12, 2008; 74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.129 Re-evaluations.

(a) A written evaluation of the draft EIS shall be prepared by the applicant in cooperation with the Administration if an acceptable final EIS is not submitted to the Administration within three years from the date of the draft EIS circulation. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether or not a supplement to the draft EIS or a new draft EIS is needed.

(b) A written evaluation of the final EIS will be required before further approvals may be granted if major steps to advance the action (e.g., authority to undertake final design, authority to acquire a significant portion of the right-of-way, or approval of the plans, specifications and estimates) have not occurred within three years after the approval of the final EIS, final EIS supplement, or the last major Administration approval or grant.

(c) After approval of the ROD, FONSI, or CE designation, the applicant shall consult with the Administration prior to requesting any major

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approvals or grants to establish whether or not the approved environmental document or CE designation remains valid for the requested Administration action. These consultations will be documented when determined necessary by the Administration.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987; 53 FR 11066, Apr. 5, 1988, as amended at 74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.130 Supplemental environmental impact statements.

(a) A draft EIS, final EIS, or supplemental EIS may be supplemented at any time. An EIS shall be supplemented whenever the Administration determines that:

(1) Changes to the proposed action would result in significant environmental impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS; or

(2) New information or circumstances relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts would result in significant environmental impacts not evaluated in the EIS.

(b) However, a supplemental EIS will not be necessary where:

(1) The changes to the proposed action, new information, or new circumstances result in a lessening of adverse environmental impacts evaluated in the EIS without causing other environmental impacts that are significant and were not evaluated in the EIS; or

(2) The Administration decides to approve an alternative fully evaluated in an approved final EIS but not identified as the preferred alternative. In such a case, a revised ROD shall be prepared and circulated in accordance with § 771.127(b).

(c) Where the Administration is uncertain of the significance of the new impacts, the applicant will develop appropriate environmental studies or, if the Administration deems appropriate, an EA to assess the impacts of the changes, new information, or new circumstances. If, based upon the studies, the Administration determines that a supplemental EIS is not necessary, the Administration shall so indicate in the project file.

(d) A supplement is to be developed using the same process and format (*i.e.*, draft EIS, final EIS, and ROD) as an

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original EIS, except that scoping is not required.

(e) A supplemental draft EIS may be necessary for major new fixed guideway capital projects proposed for FTA funding if there is a substantial change in the level of detail on project impacts during project planning and development. The supplement will address site-specific impacts and refined cost estimates that have been developed since the original draft EIS.

(f) In some cases, a supplemental EIS may be required to address issues of limited scope, such as the extent of proposed mitigation or the evaluation of location or design variations for a limited portion of the overall project. Where this is the case, the preparation of a supplemental EIS shall not necessarily:

(1) Prevent the granting of new approvals;

(2) Require the withdrawal of previous approvals; or

(3) Require the suspension of project activities; for any activity not directly affected by the supplement. If the changes in question are of such magnitude to require a reassessment of the entire action, or more than a limited portion of the overall action, the Administration shall suspend any activities which would have an adverse environmental impact or limit the choice of reasonable alternatives, until the supplemental EIS is completed.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 70 FR 24470, May 9, 2005; 74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.131 Emergency action procedures.

Requests for deviations from the procedures in this regulation because of emergency circumstances (40 CFR 1506.11) shall be referred to the Administration's headquarters for evaluation and decision after consultation with CEQ.

§ 771.133 Compliance with other requirements.

The final EIS or FONSI should document compliance with requirements of all applicable environmental laws, Executive orders, and other related requirements. If full compliance is not possible by the time the final EIS or

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FONSI is prepared, the final EIS or FONSI should reflect consultation with the appropriate agencies and provide reasonable assurance that the requirements will be met. Approval of the environmental document constitutes adoption of any Administration findings and determinations that are contained therein. The Administration's approval of an environmental document constitutes its finding of compliance with the report requirements of 23 U.S.C. 128.

[52 FR 32660, Aug. 28, 1987, as amended at 74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

§ 771.137 International actions.

(a) The requirements of this part apply to:

(1) Administration actions significantly affecting the environment of a foreign nation not participating in the action or not otherwise involved in the action.

(2) Administration actions outside the U.S., its territories, and possessions which significantly affect natural resources of global importance designated for protection by the President or by international agreement.

(b) If communication with a foreign government concerning environmental studies or documentation is anticipated, the Administration shall coordinate such communication with the Department of State through the Office of the Secretary of Transportation.

§ 771.139 Limitations on actions.

Notices announcing decisions by the Administration or by other Federal agencies on a transportation project may be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER indicating that such decisions are final within the meaning of 23 U.S.C. 139(l). Claims arising under Federal law seeking judicial review of any such decisions are barred unless filed within 180 days after publication of the notice. This 180-day time period does not lengthen any shorter time period for seeking judicial review that otherwise is established by the Federal law under which judicial review is allowed.⁶

⁶The FHWA published a detailed discussion of US DOT's interpretation of 23 U.S.C. 139(l), together with information applicable to FHWA projects about implementation proce-

This provision does not create any right of judicial review or place any limit on filing a claim that a person has violated the terms of a permit, license, or approval.

[74 FR 12530, Mar. 24, 2009]

PART 772—PROCEDURES FOR ABATEMENT OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE AND CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Sec.

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TABLE 1 TO PART 772—NOISE ABATEMENT CRITERIA

APPENDIX A TO PART 772—NATIONAL REFERENCE ENERGY MEAN EMISSION LEVELS AS A FUNCTION OF SPEED

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 109(h), 109(i); 42 U.S.C. 4331, 4332; sec. 339(b), Pub. L. 104-59, 109 Stat. 568, 605; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

SOURCE: 47 FR 29654, July 8, 1982; 47 FR 33956, Aug. 5, 1982, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 75 FR 39834, July 13, 2010, part 772 was revised, effective July 13, 2011. For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth following the text currently in effect.

§ 772.1 Purpose.

To provide procedures for noise studies and noise abatement measures to help protect the public health and welfare, to supply noise abatement criteria, and to establish requirements for information to be given to local officials for use in the planning and design of highways approved pursuant to title 23 U.S.C.

dures for 23 U.S.C. 139(l), in appendix E to the "SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process: Final Guidance," dated November 15, 2006. The implementation procedures in appendix E apply only to FHWA projects. The section 6002 guidance, including appendix E, is available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>, or in hard copy by request.

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§ 772.3 Noise standards.

The highway traffic noise prediction requirements, noise analyses, noise abatement criteria, and requirements for informing local officials in this regulation constitute the noise standards mandated by 23 U.S.C. 109(i). All highway projects which are developed in conformance with this regulation shall be deemed to be in conformance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) noise standards.

§ 772.5 Definitions.

(a) *Design year*. The future year used to estimate the probable traffic volume for which a highway is designed. A time, 10 to 20 years, from the start of construction is usually used.

(b) *Existing noise levels*. The noise, resulting from the natural and mechanical sources and human activity, considered to be usually present in a particular area.

(c) L_{10} . The sound level that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (the 90th percentile) for the period under consideration.

(d) $L_{10}(h)$. The hourly value of L_{10} .

(e) *Leq*—the equivalent steady-state sound level which in a stated period of time contains the same acoustic energy as the time-varying sound level during the same time period.

(f) *Leq(h)*. The hourly value of *Leq*.

(g) *Traffic noise impacts*. Impacts which occur when the predicted traffic noise levels approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria (Table 1), or when the predicted traffic noise levels substantially exceed the existing noise levels.

(h) *Type I projects*. A proposed Federal or Federal-aid highway project for the construction of a highway on new location or the physical alteration of an existing highway which significantly changes either the horizontal or vertical alignment or increases the number of through-traffic lanes.

(i) *Type II projects*. A proposed Federal or Federal-aid highway project for noise abatement on an existing highway.

§ 772.7 Applicability.

(a) *Type I projects*. This regulation applies to all Type I projects unless it is

specifically indicated that a section applies only to Type II projects.

(b) *Type II projects*. The development and implementation of Type II projects are not mandatory requirements of 23 U.S.C. 109(i) and are, therefore, not required by this regulation. When Type II projects are proposed for Federal-aid highway participation at the option of the highway agency, the provisions of §§ 772.9(c), 772.13, and 772.19 of this regulation shall apply.

§ 772.9 Analysis of traffic noise impacts and abatement measures.

(a) The highway agency shall determine and analyze expected traffic noise impacts and alternative noise abatement measures to mitigate these impacts, giving weight to the benefits and cost of abatement, and to the overall social, economic and environmental effects.

(b) The traffic noise analysis shall include the following for each alternative under detailed study:

(1) Identification of existing activities, developed lands, and undeveloped lands for which development is planned, designed and programmed, which may be affected by noise from the highway;

(2) Prediction of traffic noise levels;

(3) Determination of existing noise levels;

(4) Determination of traffic noise impacts; and

(5) Examination and evaluation of alternative noise abatement measures for reducing or eliminating the noise impacts.

(c) Highway agencies proposing to use Federal-aid highway funds for Type II projects shall perform a noise analysis of sufficient scope to provide information needed to make the determination required by § 772.13(a) of this chapter.

§ 772.11 Noise abatement.

(a) In determining and abating traffic noise impacts, primary consideration is to be given to exterior areas. Abatement will usually be necessary only where frequent human use occurs and a lowered noise level would be of benefit.

(b) In those situations where there are no exterior activities to be affected

by the traffic noise, or where the exterior activities are far from or physically shielded from the roadway in a manner that prevents an impact on exterior activities, the interior criterion shall be used as the basis of determining noise impacts.

(c) If a noise impact is identified, the abatement measures listed in § 772.13(c) of this chapter must be considered.

(d) When noise abatement measures are being considered, every reasonable effort shall be made to obtain substantial noise reductions.

(e) Before adoption of a final environmental impact statement or finding of no significant impact, the highway agency shall identify:

(1) Noise abatement measures which are reasonable and feasible and which are likely to be incorporated in the project, and

(2) Noise impacts for which no apparent solution is available.

(f) The views of the impacted residents will be a major consideration in reaching a decision on the reasonableness of abatement measures to be provided.

(g) The plans and specifications will not be approved by FHWA unless those noise abatement measures which are reasonable and feasible are incorporated into the plans and specifications to reduce or eliminate the noise impact on existing activities, developed lands, or undeveloped lands for which development is planned, designed, and programmed.

§ 772.13 Federal participation.

(a) Federal funds may be used for noise abatement measures where:

(1) A traffic noise impact has been identified,

(2) The noise abatement measures will reduce the traffic noise impact, and

(3) The overall noise abatement benefits are determined to outweigh the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects and the costs of the noise abatement measures.

(b) For Type II projects, noise abatement measures will only be approved for projects that were approved before November 28, 1995, or are proposed along lands where land development or substantial construction predated the

existence of any highway. The granting of a building permit, filing of a plat plan, or a similar action must have occurred prior to right-of-way acquisition or construction approval for the original highway. Noise abatement measures will not be approved at locations where such measures were previously determined not to be reasonable and feasible for a Type I project.

(c) The noise abatement measures listed below may be incorporated in Type I and Type II projects to reduce traffic noise impacts. The costs of such measures may be included in Federal-aid participating project costs with the Federal share being the same as that for the system on which the project is located.

(1) Traffic management measures (e.g., traffic control devices and signing for prohibition of certain vehicle types, time-use restrictions for certain vehicle types, modified speed limits, and exclusive lane designations).

(2) Alteration of horizontal and vertical alignments.

(3) Acquisition of property rights (either in fee or lesser interest) for construction of noise barriers.

(4) Construction of noise barriers (including landscaping for aesthetic purposes) whether within or outside the highway right-of-way.

(5) Acquisition of real property or interests therein (predominantly unimproved property) to serve as a buffer zone to preempt development which would be adversely impacted by traffic noise. This measure may be included in Type I projects only.

(6) Noise insulation of public use or nonprofit institutional structures.

(d) There may be situations where severe traffic noise impacts exist or are expected, and the abatement measures listed above are physically infeasible or economically unreasonable. In these instances, noise abatement measures other than those listed in paragraph (c) of this section may be proposed for Types I and II projects by the highway agency and approved by the FHWA on a case-by-case basis when the conditions of paragraph (a) of this section have been met.

[47 FR 29654, July 8, 1982; 47 FR 33956, Aug. 5, 1982, as amended at 61 FR 45321, Aug. 29, 1996; 70 FR 16710, Apr. 1, 2005]

§ 772.15 Information for local officials.

In an effort to prevent future traffic noise impacts on currently undeveloped lands, highway agencies shall inform local officials within whose jurisdiction the highway project is located of the following:

(a) The best estimation of future noise levels (for various distances from the highway improvement) for both developed and undeveloped lands or properties in the immediate vicinity of the project,

(b) Information that may be useful to local communities to protect future land development from becoming incompatible with anticipated highway noise levels, and

(c) Eligibility for Federal-aid participation for Type II projects as described in § 772.13(b) of this chapter.

§ 772.17 Traffic noise prediction.

(a) Any analysis required by this subpart must use the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (FHWA TNM), which is described in “FHWA Traffic Noise Model” Report No. FHWA-PD-96-010, including Revision No. 1, dated April 14, 2004, or any other model determined by the FHWA to be consistent with the methodology of the FHWA TNM. These publications are incorporated by reference in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51 and are on file at the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA call (202) 741-6030, or go to http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. These documents

are available for copying and inspection at the Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, as provided in 49 CFR part 7. These documents are also available on the FHWA’s Traffic Noise Model Web site at the following URL: <http://www.trafficnoisemodel.org/main.html>.

(b) In predicting noise levels and assessing noise impacts, traffic characteristics which will yield the worst hourly traffic noise impact on a regular basis for the design year shall be used.

[47 FR 29654, July 8, 1982; 47 FR 33956, Aug. 5, 1982, as amended at 70 FR 16710, Apr. 1, 2005; 74 FR 28442, June 16, 2009]

§ 772.19 Construction noise.

The following general steps are to be performed for all Types I and II projects:

(a) Identify land uses or activities which may be affected by noise from construction of the project. The identification is to be performed during the project development studies.

(b) Determine the measures which are needed in the plans and specifications to minimize or eliminate adverse construction noise impacts to the community. This determination shall include a weighing of the benefits achieved and the overall adverse social, economic and environmental effects and the costs of the abatement measures.

(c) Incorporate the needed abatement measures in the plans and specifications.

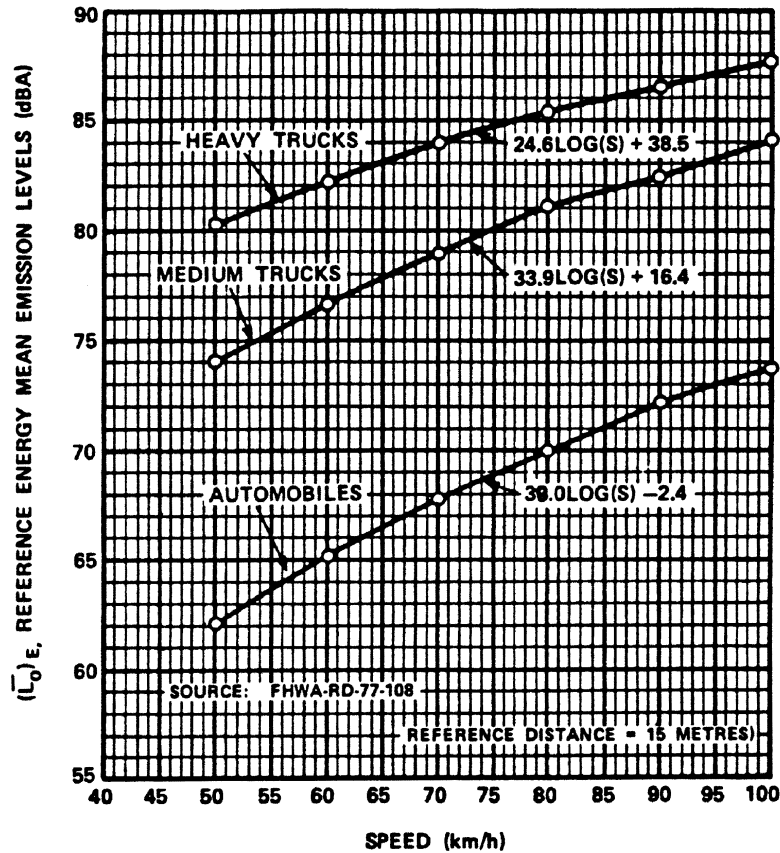
TABLE 1 TO PART 772—NOISE ABATEMENT CRITERIA

[Hourly A-Weighted Sound Level—decibels (dBA)¹]

Activity Category	Leq(h)	L ₁₀ (h)	Description of activity category
A	57 (Exterior)	60 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B	67 (Exterior)	70 (Exterior)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (Exterior)	75 (Exterior)	Developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D .....	.....	.....	Undeveloped lands.
E	52 (Interior)	55 (Interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

¹ Either L₁₀(h) or Leq(h) (but not both) may be used on a project.

APPENDIX A TO PART 772—NATIONAL REFERENCE ENERGY MEAN EMISSION LEVELS
AS A FUNCTION OF SPEED



LEGEND:

1. AUTOMOBILES: ALL VEHICLES WITH TWO AXLES AND FOUR WHEELS.
2. MEDIUM TRUCKS: ALL VEHICLES WITH TWO AXLES AND SIX WHEELS.
3. HEAVY TRUCKS: ALL VEHICLES WITH THREE OR MORE AXLES.

**National Reference Energy Mean Emission
Levels as a Function of Speed**

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 75 FR 39834, July 13, 2010, part 772 was revised, effective July 13, 2011. For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth as follows:

PART 772—PROCEDURES FOR ABATEMENT OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC NOISE AND CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Sec.

- 772.1 Purpose.
- 772.3 Noise standards.
- 772.5 Definitions.
- 772.7 Applicability.
- 772.9 Traffic noise prediction.
- 772.11 Analysis of traffic noise impacts.
- 772.13 Analysis of noise abatement.
- 772.15 Federal participation.
- 772.17 Information for local officials.
- 772.19 Construction noise.

TABLE 1 TO PART 772—NOISE ABATEMENT CRITERIA

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 109(h) and (i); 42 U.S.C. 4331, 4332; sec. 339(b), Pub. L. 104–59, 109 Stat. 568, 605; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

§ 772.1 Purpose.

To provide procedures for noise studies and noise abatement measures to help protect the public's health, welfare and livability, to supply noise abatement criteria, and to establish requirements for information to be given to local officials for use in the planning and design of highways approved pursuant to title 23 U.S.C.

§ 772.3 Noise standards.

The highway traffic noise prediction requirements, noise analyses, noise abatement criteria, and requirements for informing local officials in this regulation constitute the noise standards mandated by 23 U.S.C. 109(1). All highway projects which are developed in conformance with this regulation shall be deemed to be in accordance with the FHWA noise standards.

§ 772.5 Definitions.

Benefited receptor. The recipient of an abatement measure that receives a noise reduction at or above the minimum threshold of 5 dB(A), but not to exceed the highway agency's reasonableness design goal.

Common Noise Environment. A group of receptors within the same Activity Category in Table 1 that are exposed to similar noise sources and levels; traffic volumes, traffic mix, and speed; and topographic features. Generally, common noise environments occur between two secondary noise sources, such as interchanges, intersections, cross-roads.

Date of public knowledge. The date of approval of the Categorical Exclusion (CE), the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or the Record of Decision (ROD), as defined in 23 CFR part 771.

Design year. The future year used to estimate the probable traffic volume for which a highway is designed.

Existing noise levels. The worst noise hour resulting from the combination of natural and mechanical sources and human activity usually present in a particular area.

Feasibility. The combination of acoustical and engineering factors considered in the evaluation of a noise abatement measure.

Impacted Receptor. The recipient that has a traffic noise impact.

L10. The sound level that is exceeded 10 percent of the time (the 90th percentile) for the period under consideration, with L10(h) being the hourly value of L10.

Leq. The equivalent steady-state sound level which in a stated period of time contains the same acoustic energy as the time-varying sound level during the same time period, with Leq(h) being the hourly value of Leq.

Multifamily dwelling. A residential structure containing more than one residence. Each residence in a multifamily dwelling shall be counted as one receptor when determining impacted and benefited receptors.

Noise barrier. A physical obstruction that is constructed between the highway noise source and the noise sensitive receptor(s) that lowers the noise level, including stand alone noise walls, noise berms (earth or other material), and combination berm/wall systems.

Noise reduction design goal. The optimum desired dB(A) noise reduction determined from calculating the difference between future build noise levels with abatement, to future build noise levels without abatement. The noise reduction design goal shall be at least 7 dB(A), but not more than 10 dB(A).

Permitted. A definite commitment to develop land with an approved specific design of land use activities as evidenced by the issuance of a building permit.

Property owner. An individual or group of individuals that holds a title, deed, or other legal documentation of ownership of a property or a residence.

Reasonableness. The combination of social, economic, and environmental factors considered in the evaluation of a noise abatement measure.

Receptor. A discrete or representative location of a noise sensitive area(s), for any of the land uses listed in Table 1.

Residence. A dwelling unit. Either a single family residence or each dwelling unit in a multifamily dwelling.

Statement of likelihood. A statement provided in the environmental clearance document based on the feasibility and reasonableness analysis completed at the time the environmental document is being approved.

Substantial construction. The granting of a building permit, prior to right-of-way acquisition or construction approval for the highway.

Substantial noise increase. One of two types of highway traffic noise impacts. For a Type

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I project, an increase in noise levels of 5 to 15 dB(A) in the design year over the existing noise level.

Traffic noise impacts. Design year build condition noise levels that approach or exceed the NAC listed in Table 1 for the future build condition; or design year build condition noise levels that create a substantial noise increase over existing noise levels.

Type I project. (1) The construction of a highway on new location; or,

(2) The physical alteration of an existing highway where there is either:

(i) Substantial Horizontal Alteration. A project that halves the distance between the traffic noise source and the closest receptor between the existing condition to the future build condition; or,

(ii) Substantial Vertical Alteration. A project that removes shielding therefore exposing the line-of-sight between the receptor and the traffic noise source. This is done by either altering the vertical alignment of the highway or by altering the topography between the highway traffic noise source and the receptor; or,

(3) The addition of a through-traffic lane(s). This includes the addition of a through-traffic lane that functions as a HOV lane, High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane, bus lane, or truck climbing lane; or,

(4) The addition of an auxiliary lane, except for when the auxiliary lane is a turn lane; or,

(5) The addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps added to a quadrant to complete an existing partial interchange; or,

(6) Restriping existing pavement for the purpose of adding a through-traffic lane or an auxiliary lane; or,

(7) The addition of a new or substantial alteration of a weigh station, rest stop, ride-share lot or toll plaza.

(8) If a project is determined to be a Type I project under this definition then the entire project area as defined in the environmental document is a Type I project.

Type II project. A Federal or Federal-aid highway project for noise abatement on an existing highway. For a Type II project to be eligible for Federal-aid funding, the highway agency must develop and implement a Type II program in accordance with section 772.7(e).

Type III project. A Federal or Federal-aid highway project that does not meet the classifications of a Type I or Type II project. Type III projects do not require a noise analysis.

§ 772.7 Applicability.

(a) This regulation applies to all Federal or Federal-aid Highway Projects authorized under title 23, United States Code. Therefore, this regulation applies to any highway project or multimodal project that:

(1) Requires FHWA approval regardless of funding sources, or

(2) Is funded with Federal-aid highway funds.

(b) In order to obtain FHWA approval, the highway agency shall develop noise policies in conformance with this regulation and shall apply these policies uniformly and consistently statewide.

(c) This regulation applies to all Type I projects unless the regulation specifically indicates that a section only applies to Type II or Type III projects.

(d) The development and implementation of Type II projects are not mandatory requirements of section 109(i) of title 23, United States Code.

(e) If a highway agency chooses to participate in a Type II program, the highway agency shall develop a priority system, based on a variety of factors, to rank the projects in the program. This priority system shall be submitted to and approved by FHWA before the highway agency is allowed to use Federal-aid funds for a project in the program. The highway agency shall re-analyze the priority system on a regular interval, not to exceed 5 years.

(f) For a Type III project, a highway agency is not required to complete a noise analysis or consider abatement measures.

§ 772.9 Traffic noise prediction.

(a) Any analysis required by this subpart must use the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM), which is described in "FHWA Traffic Noise Model" Report No. FHWA-PD-96-010, including Revision No. 1, dated April 14, 2004, or any other model determined by the FHWA to be consistent with the methodology of the FHWA TNM. These publications are incorporated by reference in accordance with section 552(a) of title 5, U.S.C. and part 51 of title 1, CFR, and are on file at the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call (202) 741-6030 or go to http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. These documents are available for copying and inspection at the Federal Highway Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590, as provided in part 7 of title 49, CFR. These documents are also available on the FHWA's Traffic Noise Model Web site at the following URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/index.htm>.

(b) Average pavement type shall be used in the FHWA TNM for future noise level prediction unless a highway agency substantiates the use of a different pavement type for approval by the FHWA.

(c) Noise contour lines may be used for project alternative screening or for land use planning to comply with § 772.17 of this part,

but shall not be used for determining highway traffic noise impacts.

(d) In predicting noise levels and assessing noise impacts, traffic characteristics that would yield the worst traffic noise impact for the design year shall be used.

§ 772.11 Analysis of traffic noise impacts.

(a) The highway agency shall determine and analyze expected traffic noise impacts.

(1) For projects on new alignments, determine traffic noise impacts by field measurements.

(2) For projects on existing alignments, predict existing and design year traffic noise impacts.

(b) In determining traffic noise impacts, a highway agency shall give primary consideration to exterior areas where frequent human use occurs.

(c) A traffic noise analysis shall be completed for:

(1) Each alternative under detailed study;

(2) Each Activity Category of the NAC listed in Table 1 that is present in the study area;

(i) *Activity Category A.* This activity category includes the exterior impact criteria for lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need, and where the preservation of those qualities is essential for the area to continue to serve its intended purpose. Highway agencies shall submit justifications to the FHWA on a case-by-case basis for approval of an Activity Category A designation.

(ii) *Activity Category B.* This activity category includes the exterior impact criteria for single-family and multifamily residences.

(iii) *Activity Category C.* This activity category includes the exterior impact criteria for a variety of land use facilities. Each highway agency shall adopt a standard practice for analyzing these land use facilities that is consistent and uniformly applied statewide.

(iv) *Activity Category D.* This activity category includes the interior impact criteria for certain land use facilities listed in Activity Category C that may have interior uses. A highway agency shall conduct an indoor analysis after a determination is made that exterior abatement measures will not be feasible and reasonable. An indoor analysis shall only be done after exhausting all outdoor analysis options. In situations where no exterior activities are to be affected by the traffic noise, or where the exterior activities are far from or physically shielded from the roadway in a manner that prevents an impact on exterior activities, the highway agency shall use Activity Category D as the basis of determining noise impacts. Each highway agency shall adopt a standard practice for analyzing these land use facilities

that is consistent and uniformly applied statewide.

(v) *Activity Category E.* This activity category includes the exterior impact criteria for developed lands that are less sensitive to highway noise. Each highway agency shall adopt a standard practice for analyzing these land use facilities that is consistent and uniformly applied statewide.

(vi) *Activity Category F.* This activity category includes developed lands that are not sensitive to highway traffic noise. There is no impact criteria for the land use facilities in this activity category and no analysis of noise impacts is required.

(vii) *Activity Category G.* This activity includes undeveloped lands.

(A) A highway agency shall determine if undeveloped land is permitted for development. The milestone and its associated date for acknowledging when undeveloped land is considered permitted shall be the date of issuance of a building permit by the local jurisdiction or by the appropriate governing entity.

(B) If undeveloped land is determined to be permitted, then the highway agency shall assign the land to the appropriate Activity Category and analyze it in the same manner as developed lands in that Activity Category.

(C) If undeveloped land is not permitted for development by the date of public knowledge, the highway agency shall determine noise levels in accordance with 772.17(a) and document the results in the project's environmental clearance documents and noise analysis documents. Federal participation in noise abatement measures will not be considered for lands that are not permitted by the date of public knowledge.

(d) The analysis of traffic noise impacts shall include:

(1) Identification of existing activities, developed lands, and undeveloped lands, which may be affected by noise from the highway;

(2) For projects on new or existing alignments, validate predicted noise level through comparison between measured and predicted levels;

(3) Measurement of noise levels. Use an ANSI Type I or Type II integrating sound level meter;

(4) Identification of project limits to determine all traffic noise impacts for the design year for the build alternative. For Type II projects, traffic noise impacts shall be determined from current year conditions;

(e) Highway agencies shall establish an approach level to be used when determining a traffic noise impact. The approach level shall be at least 1 dB(A) less than the Noise Abatement Criteria for Activity Categories A to E listed in Table 1 to part 772;

(f) Highway agencies shall define substantial noise increase between 5 dB(A) to 15

dB(A) over existing noise levels. The substantial noise increase criterion is independent of the absolute noise level.

(g) A highway agency proposing to use Federal-aid highway funds for a Type II project shall perform a noise analysis in accordance with § 772.11 of this part in order to provide information needed to make the determination required by § 772.13(a) of this part.

§ 772.13 Analysis of noise abatement.

(a) When traffic noise impacts are identified, noise abatement shall be considered and evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness. The highway agency shall determine and analyze alternative noise abatement measures to abate identified impacts by giving weight to the benefits and costs of abatement and the overall social, economic, and environmental effects by using feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures for decision-making.

(b) In abating traffic noise impacts, a highway agency shall give primary consideration to exterior areas where frequent human use occurs.

(c) If a noise impact is identified, a highway agency shall consider abatement measures. The abatement measures listed in § 772.15(c) of this part are eligible for Federal funding.

(1) At a minimum, the highway agency shall consider noise abatement in the form of a noise barrier.

(2) If a highway agency chooses to use absorptive treatments as a functional enhancement, the highway agency shall adopt a standard practice for using absorptive treatment that is consistent and uniformly applied statewide.

(d) *Examination and evaluation of feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures for reducing the traffic noise impacts.* Each highway agency, with FHWA approval, shall develop feasibility and reasonableness factors.

(1) *Feasibility:* (i) Achievement of at least a 5 dB(A) highway traffic noise reduction at impacted receptors. The highway agency shall define, and receive FHWA approval for, the number of receptors that must achieve this reduction for the noise abatement measure to be acoustically feasible and explain the basis for this determination; and

(ii) Determination that it is possible to design and construct the noise abatement measure. Factors to consider are safety, barrier height, topography, drainage, utilities, and maintenance of the abatement measure, maintenance access to adjacent properties, and access to adjacent properties (*i.e.* arterial widening projects).

(2) *Reasonableness:*—(i) *Consideration of the viewpoints of the property owners and residents of the benefited receptors.* The highway agency shall solicit the viewpoints of all of the benefited receptors and obtain enough responses

to document a decision on either desiring or not desiring the noise abatement measure. The highway agency shall define, and receive FHWA approval for, the number of receptors that are needed to constitute a decision and explain the basis for this determination.

(ii) *Cost effectiveness of the highway traffic noise abatement measures.* Each highway agency shall determine, and receive FHWA approval for, the allowable cost of abatement by determining a baseline cost reasonableness value. This determination may include the actual construction cost of noise abatement, cost per square foot of abatement, the maximum square footage of abatement/benefited receptor and either the cost/benefited receptor or cost/benefited receptor/dB(A) reduction. The highway agency shall re-analyze the allowable cost for abatement on a regular interval, not to exceed 5 years. A highway agency has the option of justifying, for FHWA approval, different cost allowances for a particular geographic area(s) within the State, however, the highway agency must use the same cost reasonableness/construction cost ratio statewide.

(iii) *Noise reduction design goals for highway traffic noise abatement measures.* When noise abatement measure(s) are being considered, a highway agency shall achieve a noise reduction design goal. The highway agency shall define, and receive FHWA approval for, the design goal of at least 7 dB(A) but not more than 10 dB(A), and shall define the number of benefited receptors that must achieve this design goal and explain the basis for this determination.

(iv) The reasonableness factors listed in § 772.13(d)(5)(i), (ii) and (iii), must collectively be achieved in order for a noise abatement measure to be deemed reasonable. Failure to achieve § 772.13(d)(5)(i), (ii) or (iii), will result in the noise abatement measure being deemed not reasonable.

(v) In addition to the required reasonableness factors listed in § 772.13(d)(5)(i), (ii), and (iii), a highway agency has the option to also include the following reasonableness factors: Date of development, length of time receivers have been exposed to highway traffic noise impacts, exposure to higher absolute highway traffic noise levels, changes between existing and future build conditions, percentage of mixed zoning development, and use of noise compatible planning concepts by the local government. No single optional reasonableness factor can be used to determine reasonableness.

(e) *Assessment of Benefited Receptors.* Each highway agency shall define the threshold for the noise reduction which determines a benefited receptor as at or above the 5 dB(A), but not to exceed the highway agency's reasonableness design goal.

(f) *Abatement measure reporting:* Each highway agency shall maintain an inventory of all constructed noise abatement measures.

The inventory shall include the following parameters: type of abatement; cost (overall cost, unit cost per/sq. ft.); average height; length; area; location (State, county, city, route); year of construction; average insertion loss/noise reduction as reported by the model in the noise analysis; NAC category(s) protected; material(s) used (precast concrete, berm, block, cast in place concrete, brick, metal, wood, fiberglass, combination, plastic (transparent, opaque, other); features (absorptive, reflective, surface texture); foundation (ground mounted, on structure); project type (Type I, Type II, and optional project types such as State funded, county funded, tollway/turnpike funded, other, unknown). The FHWA will collect this information, in accordance with OMB's Information Collection requirements.

(g) Before adoption of a CE, FONSI, or ROD, the highway agency shall identify:

(1) Noise abatement measures which are feasible and reasonable, and which are likely to be incorporated in the project; and

(2) Noise impacts for which no noise abatement measures are feasible and reasonable.

(3) *Documentation of highway traffic noise abatement*: The environmental document shall identify locations where noise impacts are predicted to occur, where noise abatement is feasible and reasonable, and locations with impacts that have no feasible or reasonable noise abatement alternative. For environmental clearance, this analysis shall be completed to the extent that design information on the alternative(s) under study in the environmental document is available at the time the environmental clearance document is completed. A statement of likelihood shall be included in the environmental document since feasibility and reasonableness determinations may change due to changes in project design after approval of the environmental document. The statement of likelihood shall include the preliminary location and physical description of noise abatement measures determined feasible and reasonable in the preliminary analysis. The statement of likelihood shall also indicate that final recommendations on the construction of an abatement measure(s) is determined during the completion of the project's final design and the public involvement processes.

(h) The FHWA will not approve project plans and specifications unless feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures are incorporated into the plans and specifications to reduce the noise impact on existing activities, developed lands, or undeveloped lands for which development is permitted.

(i) For design-build projects, the preliminary technical noise study shall document all considered and proposed noise abatement measures for inclusion in the NEPA document. Final design of design-build noise abatement measures shall be based on the

preliminary noise abatement design developed in the technical noise analysis. Noise abatement measures shall be considered, developed, and constructed in accordance with this standard and in conformance with the provisions of 40 CFR 1506.5(c) and 23 CFR 636.109.

(j) Third party funding is not allowed on a Federal or Federal-aid Type I or Type II project if the noise abatement measure would require the additional funding from the third party to be considered feasible and/or reasonable. Third party funding is acceptable on a Federal or Federal-aid highway Type I or Type II project to make functional enhancements, such as absorptive treatment and access doors or aesthetic enhancements, to a noise abatement measure already determined feasible and reasonable.

(k) On a Type I or Type II projects, a highway agency has the option to cost average noise abatement among benefited receptors within common noise environments if no single common noise environment exceeds two times the highway agency's cost reasonableness criteria and collectively all common noise environments being averaged do not exceed the highway agency's cost reasonableness criteria.

§ 772.15 Federal participation.

(a) *Type I and Type II projects*. Federal funds may be used for noise abatement measures when:

(1) Traffic noise impacts have been identified; and

(2) Abatement measures have been determined to be feasible and reasonable pursuant to § 772.13(d) of this chapter.

(b) *For Type II projects*. (1) No funds made available out of the Highway Trust Fund may be used to construct Type II noise barriers, as defined by this regulation, if such noise barriers were not part of a project approved by the FHWA before the November 28, 1995.

(2) Federal funds are available for Type II noise barriers along lands that were developed or were under substantial construction before approval of the acquisition of the rights-of-ways for, or construction of, the existing highway.

(3) FHWA will not approve noise abatement measures for locations where such measures were previously determined not to be feasible and reasonable for a Type I project.

(c) *Noise abatement measures*. The following noise abatement measures may be considered for incorporation into a Type I or Type II project to reduce traffic noise impacts. The costs of such measures may be included in Federal-aid participating project costs with the Federal share being the same as that for the system on which the project is located.

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(1) Construction of noise barriers, including acquisition of property rights, either within or outside the highway right-of-way. Landscaping is not a viable noise abatement measure.

(2) Traffic management measures including, but not limited to, traffic control devices and signing for prohibition of certain vehicle types, time-use restrictions for certain vehicle types, modified speed limits, and exclusive lane designations.

(3) Alteration of horizontal and vertical alignments.

(4) Acquisition of real property or interests therein (predominantly unimproved property) to serve as a buffer zone to preempt development which would be adversely impacted by traffic noise. This measure may be included in Type I projects only.

(5) Noise insulation of Activity Category D land use facilities listed in Table 1. Post-installation maintenance and operational costs for noise insulation are not eligible for Federal-aid funding.

§ 772.17 Information for local officials.

(a) To minimize future traffic noise impacts on currently undeveloped lands of Type I projects, a highway agency shall inform local officials within whose jurisdiction the highway project is located of:

(1) Noise compatible planning concepts;

(2) The best estimation of the future design year noise levels at various distances from the edge of the nearest travel lane of the highway improvement where the future

noise levels meet the highway agency's definition of "approach" for undeveloped lands or properties within the project limits. At a minimum, identify the distance to the exterior noise abatement criteria in Table 1;

(3) Non-eligibility for Federal-aid participation for a Type II project as described in § 772.15(b).

(b) If a highway agency chooses to participate in a Type II noise program or to use the date of development as one of the factors in determining the reasonableness of a Type I noise abatement measure, the highway agency shall have a statewide outreach program to inform local officials and the public of the items in § 772.17(a)(1) through (3).

§ 772.19 Construction noise.

For all Type I and II projects, a highway agency shall:

(a) Identify land uses or activities that may be affected by noise from construction of the project. The identification is to be performed during the project development studies.

(b) Determine the measures that are needed in the plans and specifications to minimize or eliminate adverse construction noise impacts to the community. This determination shall include a weighing of the benefits achieved and the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects and costs of the abatement measures.

(c) Incorporate the needed abatement measures in the plans and specifications.

TABLE 1 TO PART 772—NOISE ABATEMENT CRITERIA
[Hourly A-Weighted Sound Level __decibels (dB(A)) ¹]

Activity category	Activity Leq(h)	Criteria ² L10(h)	Evaluation location	Activity description
A	57	60	Exterior	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B ³	67	70	Exterior	Residential.
C ³	67	70	Exterior	Active sport areas, amphitheatres, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.
D	52	55	Interior	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E ³	72	75	Exterior	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties or activities not included in A–D or F.
F .....	.....	.....	.....	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical), and warehousing.
G .....	.....	.....	.....	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted.

¹ Either Leq(h) or L10(h) (but not both) may be used on a project.

² The Leq(h) and L10(h) Activity Criteria values are for impact determination only, and are not design standards for noise abatement measures.

³ Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category.

PART 773—SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT DELIVERY PILOT PROGRAM

Sec.

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APPENDIX A TO PART 773—FHWA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MAY BE ASSIGNED UNDER SECTION 6005.

AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 315 and 327; 49 CFR 1.48.

SOURCE: 72 FR 6470, Feb. 12, 2007, unless otherwise noted.

§ 773.101 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to establish the requirements, as directed by 23 U.S.C. 327(b)(2), relating to the information which must be contained in an application by a State to participate in the program allowing the Secretary to assign, and a State Department of Transportation (State DOT) to assume, responsibilities for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321–4347) and other Federal environmental laws pertaining to the review or approval of a highway project(s).

§ 773.102 Applicability.

This part applies to any State DOT eligible under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 327 that submits an application for participation in the program.

§ 773.103 Definitions.

Unless otherwise specified in this part, the definitions in 23 U.S.C. 101(a) are applicable to this part. As used in this part:

Classes of highway projects means either a defined group of highway projects or all highway projects to which Federal environmental laws apply.

Federal environmental law means any Federal law or Executive Order (EO) under which the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation has responsibilities for environ-

mental review, consultation, or other action with respect to the review or approval of highway projects. A list of the Federal environmental laws for which a State DOT may assume the responsibilities of the Secretary under this pilot program include, but are not limited to, the list of laws contained in Appendix A to this Part. But, under 23 U.S.C. 327(a)(2)(B), the Secretary's responsibility for conformity determinations required under section 176 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7506) and the responsibility imposed on the Secretary under 23 U.S.C. 134 and 135 are not included in the program. Also, Federal environmental law includes only laws that are inherently environmental and does not include responsibilities such as Interstate access approvals (23 U.S.C. 111).

Highway project means any undertaking to construct (including initial construction, reconstruction, replacement, rehabilitation, restoration, or other improvements) a highway, bridge, or tunnel, or any portion thereof, including environmental mitigation activities, which is eligible for assistance under title 23 of the United States Code. A highway project may include an undertaking that involves a series of contracts or phases, such as a corridor, and also may include anything that may be constructed in connection with a highway, bridge, or tunnel. However, the term highway project does not include any of the priority projects designated under Executive Order 13274; does not include any Federal Lands Highway project unless such project is to be designed and constructed by the State DOT; and does not include projects that are funded under chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code. Nothing in this part is intended to limit the consideration of any alternative in conducting an environmental analysis under any Federal environmental law, even if the particular alternative would provide for a project that is excluded under this section and may consider and include that alternative within the range of alternatives for a highway project.

Program means the "Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program" established under 23 U.S.C. 327, which allows up to five State DOTs to assume

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all or part of the responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other action required under any Federal environmental law pertaining to the review or approval of one or more highway projects.

§ 773.104 Eligibility.

(a) Only a State DOT of a State is eligible to participate in the program.

(b) The program is limited to a maximum five State DOTs, including the State DOTs of Alaska, California, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas as the five participant States. Should any of these five State DOTs choose not to apply, have its participation terminated, or withdraw from the pilot program, another State DOT may be selected.

§ 773.105 Statements of interest.

(a) The State DOTs of Alaska, California, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas are given priority for participation in the program.

(b) Within sixty days of March 14, 2007, the State DOTs of Alaska, California, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas shall submit a statement of interest to participate in the program. The statement of interest shall declare that the State DOT intends to submit an application to participate in the pilot program.

(c) Should any of the State DOTs of Alaska, California, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas fail to submit a statement of interest by May 14, 2007 or decline participation in the pilot program, such State DOT shall no longer be given priority consideration for selection in the program and its application will be selected in competition with other State DOTs.

(d) Should any of the State DOTs of Alaska, California, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas submit a statement of interest declaring their intent to participate in the program, the State shall actively work to develop and submit its application and meet all applicable program criteria (including the enactment of necessary State legal authority).

§ 773.106 Application requirements for participation in the program.

(a) Each State DOT wishing to participate in the program must submit an application to the FHWA.

(b) Each application submitted to the FHWA must contain the following information:

(1) The highway project(s) or classes of highway projects for which the State is requesting to assume FHWA's responsibilities under NEPA. The State DOT must specifically identify, in its application, each project for which a draft environmental impact statement has been issued prior to the submission of its application to the FHWA;

(2) The specific responsibilities for the environmental review, consultation, or other action required under other Federal environmental laws, if any, pertaining to the review or approval of a highway project, or classes of highway projects, that the State DOT wishes to assume under this program. The State DOT must also indicate whether it proposes to phase-in the assumption of these responsibilities;

(3) For each responsibility requested in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section, the State DOT shall submit a description in the application detailing how it intends to carry out these responsibilities. The description shall include:

(i) A summary of State procedures currently in place to guide the development of documents, analyses and consultations required to fulfill the environmental responsibilities requested. The actual procedures should be submitted with the application, or if available electronically, the Web link must be provided;

(ii) Any changes that have been or will be made in the management of the environmental program to provide the additional staff and training necessary for quality control and assurance, appropriate levels of analysis, adequate expertise in areas where responsibilities have been requested, and expertise in management of the NEPA process;

(iii) A discussion of how the State DOT will verify legal sufficiency for the environmental document it produces; and

(iv) A discussion of how the State DOT will identify and address those projects that would normally require FHWA headquarters prior concurrence of the FEIS under 23 CFR 771.125(c).

(4) A verification of the personnel necessary to carry out the authority that may be granted under the program. The verification shall contain the following information:

(i) A description of the staff positions, including management, that will be dedicated to providing the additional functions needed to accept the delegated responsibilities;

(ii) A description of any changes to the State DOT's organizational structure that are deemed necessary to provide for efficient administration of the responsibilities assumed; and

(iii) A discussion of personnel needs that may be met by the State DOTs use of outside consultants, including legal counsel provided by the State Attorney General or private counsel;

(5) A summary of financial resources showing the anticipated financial resources available to meet the activities and staffing needs identified in (b)(3) and (b)(4) of this part, and a commitment to make adequate financial resources available to meet these needs;

(6) Certification and explanation by State's Attorney General, or other State official legally empowered by State law, that the State DOT can and will assume the responsibilities of the Secretary for the Federal environmental laws and projects requested and that the State DOT will consent to exclusive Federal court jurisdiction with respect to the responsibilities being assumed. Such consent must be broad enough to include future changes in relevant Federal policies and procedures to which FHWA would be subject or such consent would be amended to include such future changes;

(7) Certification by the State's Attorney General, or other State official legally empowered by State law, that the State has laws that are comparable to the Federal Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), including laws that allow for any decision regarding the public availability of a document under those laws to be reviewed by a court of competent jurisdiction; and

(8) Evidence that the required notice and solicitation of public comment by the State DOT relating to participation in the program has taken place. Requirements for notice and solicitation of public comments are as follows:

(i) not later than 30 days prior to submitting its application, a State must give notice that the State intends to participate in the program and solicit public comment by publishing the complete application of the State in accordance with the appropriate public notice law of the State. If allowed under State law, publishing a notice of availability of the application rather than the application itself may satisfy the requirements of this subparagraph so long as the complete application is made reasonably available to the public for inspection and copying, and

(ii) copies of all comments received shall be submitted with the application. The State should summarize the comments received, and note changes, if any, that were made in the application in response to public comments.

(c) The application shall be signed by the Governor or the head of the State agency having primary jurisdiction over highway matters. The application must also identify a point of contact for questions regarding the application. Applications may be submitted in electronic format.

§ 773.107 Application approval.

If a State DOT's application is approved, then the State DOT will be invited to enter into a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the FHWA, as provided in 23 U.S.C. 327. None of FHWA's responsibilities under NEPA or other environmental laws may be assumed by the State DOT prior to execution of the MOU.

§ 773.108 Application amendments.

(a) After a State DOT submits its application to the FHWA, but prior to the execution of a MOU, the State DOT may amend its application at any time to request additional highway projects, classes of highway projects, or more environmental responsibilities. However, prior to making any such amendments, the State DOT must provide notice and solicit public comments with respect to the intended amendments. In submitting the amendment to the FHWA, the State DOT must provide copies of all comments received and note the changes, if any, that were made in response to the comments.

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(b) A State DOT may amend its application no earlier than one year after a MOU has been executed to request additional highway projects, classes of highway projects, or more environmental responsibilities. However, prior to making any such amendments, the State DOT must provide notice and solicit public comments with respect to the intended amendments. In submitting the amendment to the FHWA, the State DOT must provide copies of all comments received and note the changes, if any, that were made in response to the comments.

APPENDIX A TO PART 773—FHWA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MAY BE ASSIGNED UNDER SECTION 6005

Federal Procedures

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321-43351.
FHWA Environmental Regulations at 23 CFR Part 771, 772 and 777
CEQ Regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508
Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671(q). *Any determinations that do not involve conformity.*

Noise

Compliance with the noise regulations at 23 CFR part 772

Wildlife

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, and Section 1536
Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 1361
Anadromous Fish Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 757(a)-757(g)
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661-667(d)
Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. 703-712
Magnuson-Stevenson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Historic and Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470(f) *et seq.*
Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1977, 16 U.S.C. 470(aa)-11
Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 469-469(c)
Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C. 3001-3013

Social and Economic Impacts

American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. 1996

Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), 7 U.S.C. 4201-4209

Water Resources and Wetlands

Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1251-1377
Section 404
Section 401
Section 319
Coastal Barrier Resources Act, 16 U.S.C. 3501-3510
Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1451-1465
Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), 42 U.S.C. 300(f)-300(j)(6)
Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, 33 U.S.C. 403
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287
Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, 16 U.S.C. 3921, 3931
TEA-21 Wetlands Mitigation, 23 U.S.C. 103(b)(6)(m), 133(b)(11)
Flood Disaster Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. 4001-4128

Parklands

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), 16 U.S.C. 4601-4604

Hazardous Materials

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. 9601-9675
Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA)
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. 6901-6992(k)

Executive Orders Relating to Highway Projects

E.O. 11990 Protection of Wetlands
E.O. 11988 Floodplain Management
E.O. 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations
E.O. 13112 Invasive Species

PART 774—PARKS, RECREATION AREAS, WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL REFUGES, AND HISTORIC SITES (SECTION 4(F))

Sec.

774.1 Purpose.
774.3 Section 4(f) approvals.
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774.7 Documentation.
774.9 Timing.
774.11 Applicability.
774.13 Exceptions.
774.15 Constructive use determinations.
774.17 Definitions.

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AUTHORITY: 23 U.S.C. 103(c), 109(h), 138, 325, 326, 327 and 204(h)(2); 49 U.S.C. 303; Section 6009 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Pub. L. 109-59, Aug. 10, 2005, 119 Stat. 1144); 49 CFR 1.48 and 1.51.

SOURCE: 73 FR 13395, Mar. 12, 2008, unless otherwise noted.

§ 774.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this part is to implement 23 U.S.C. 138 and 49 U.S.C. 303, which were originally enacted as Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and are still commonly referred to as “Section 4(f).”

§ 774.3 Section 4(f) approvals.

The Administration may not approve the use, as defined in § 774.17, of Section 4(f) property unless a determination is made under paragraph (a) or (b) of this section.

(a) The Administration determines that:

(1) There is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative, as defined in § 774.17, to the use of land from the property; and

(2) The action includes all possible planning, as defined in § 774.17, to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use; or

(b) The Administration determines that the use of the property, including any measure(s) to minimize harm (such as any avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or enhancement measures) committed to by the applicant, will have a *de minimis* impact, as defined in § 774.17, on the property.

(c) If the analysis in paragraph (a)(1) of this section concludes that there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative, then the Administration may approve, from among the remaining alternatives that use Section 4(f) property, only the alternative that:

(1) Causes the least overall harm in light of the statute’s preservation purpose. The least overall harm is determined by balancing the following factors:

(i) The ability to mitigate adverse impacts to each Section 4(f) property (including any measures that result in benefits to the property);

(ii) The relative severity of the remaining harm, after mitigation, to the protected activities, attributes, or fea-

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tures that qualify each Section 4(f) property for protection;

(iii) The relative significance of each Section 4(f) property;

(iv) The views of the official(s) with jurisdiction over each Section 4(f) property;

(v) The degree to which each alternative meets the purpose and need for the project;

(vi) After reasonable mitigation, the magnitude of any adverse impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f); and

(vii) Substantial differences in costs among the alternatives.

(2) The alternative selected must include all possible planning, as defined in § 774.17, to minimize harm to Section 4(f) property.

(d) Programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations are a time-saving procedural alternative to preparing individual Section 4(f) evaluations under paragraph (a) of this section for certain minor uses of Section 4(f) property. Programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations are developed by the Administration based on experience with a specific set of conditions that includes project type, degree of use and impact, and evaluation of avoidance alternatives.¹ An approved programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation may be relied upon to cover a particular project only if the specific conditions in the programmatic evaluation are met

(1) The determination whether a programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applies to the use of a specific Section 4(f) property shall be documented as

¹FHWA has issued five programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations: (1) Final Nationwide Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation and Determination for Federal-Aid Transportation Projects That Have a Net Benefit to a Section 4(f) Property; (2) Nationwide Section 4(f) Evaluations and Approvals for Federally-Aided Highway Projects With Minor Involvement With Public Parks, Recreation Lands, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites; (3) Final Nationwide Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval for Federally-Aided Highway Projects With Minor Involvements With Historic Sites; (4) Historic Bridges; Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation and Approval; and (5) Section 4(f) Statement and Determination for Independent Bikeway or Walkway Construction Projects.

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specified in the applicable programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation.

(2) The Administration may develop additional programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations. Proposed new or revised programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations will be coordinated with the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, and published in the FEDERAL REGISTER for comment prior to being finalized. New or revised programmatic Section 4(f) evaluations shall be reviewed for legal sufficiency and approved by the Headquarters Office of the Administration.

(e) The coordination requirements in § 774.5 must be completed before the Administration may make Section 4(f) approvals under this section. Requirements for the documentation and timing of Section 4(f) approvals are located in §§ 774.7 and 774.9, respectively.

[73 FR 13395, Mar. 12, 2008, as amended at 73 FR 31610, June 3, 2008]

§ 774.5 Coordination.

(a) Prior to making Section 4(f) approvals under § 774.3(a), the Section 4(f) evaluation shall be provided for coordination and comment to the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource and to the Department of the Interior, and as appropriate to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Administration shall provide a minimum of 45 days for receipt of comments. If comments are not received within 15 days after the comment deadline, the Administration may assume a lack of objection and proceed with the action.

(b) Prior to making *de minimis* impact determinations under § 774.3(b), the following coordination shall be undertaken:

(1) For historic properties:

(i) The consulting parties identified in accordance with 36 CFR part 800 must be consulted; and

(ii) The Administration must receive written concurrence from the pertinent State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), and from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) if participating in the consultation process, in a finding of “no

adverse effect” or “no historic properties affected” in accordance with 36 CFR part 800. The Administration shall inform these officials of its intent to make a *de minimis* impact determination based on their concurrence in the finding of “no adverse effect” or “no historic properties affected.”

(iii) Public notice and comment, beyond that required by 36 CFR part 800, is not required.

(2) For parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges:

(i) Public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment concerning the effects on the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property must be provided. This requirement can be satisfied in conjunction with other public involvement procedures, such as a comment period provided on a NEPA document.

(ii) The Administration shall inform the official(s) with jurisdiction of its intent to make a *de minimis* impact finding. Following an opportunity for public review and comment as described in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource must concur in writing that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that make the property eligible for Section 4(f) protection. This concurrence may be combined with other comments on the project provided by the official(s).

(c) The application of a programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation to the use of a specific Section 4(f) property under § 774.3(d)(1) shall be coordinated as specified in the applicable programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation.

(d) When Federal encumbrances on Section 4(f) property are identified, coordination with the appropriate Federal agency is required to ascertain the agency's position on the proposed impact, as well as to determine if any other Federal requirements may apply to converting the Section 4(f) land to a different function. Any such requirements must be satisfied, independent of the Section 4(f) approval.

§ 774.7 Documentation.

(a) A Section 4(f) evaluation prepared under § 774.3(a) shall include sufficient

supporting documentation to demonstrate why there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative and shall summarize the results of all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property.

(b) A *de minimis* impact determination under § 774.3(b) shall include sufficient supporting documentation to demonstrate that the impacts, after avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or enhancement measures are taken into account, are *de minimis* as defined in § 774.17; and that the coordination required in § 774.5(b) has been completed.

(c) If there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative the Administration may approve only the alternative that causes the least overall harm in accordance with § 774.3(c). This analysis must be documented in the Section 4(f) evaluation.

(d) The Administration shall review all Section 4(f) approvals under §§ 774.3(a) and 774.3(c) for legal sufficiency.

(e) A Section 4(f) approval may involve different levels of detail where the Section 4(f) involvement is addressed in a tiered EIS under § 771.111(g) of this chapter.

(1) When the first-tier, broad-scale EIS is prepared, the detailed information necessary to complete the Section 4(f) approval may not be available at that stage in the development of the action. In such cases, the documentation should address the potential impacts that a proposed action will have on Section 4(f) property and whether those impacts could have a bearing on the decision to be made. A preliminary Section 4(f) approval may be made at this time as to whether the impacts resulting from the use of a Section 4(f) property are *de minimis* or whether there are feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives. This preliminary approval shall include all possible planning to minimize harm to the extent that the level of detail available at the first-tier EIS stage allows. It is recognized that such planning at this stage may be limited to ensuring that opportunities to minimize harm at subsequent stages in the development process have not been precluded by decisions made at the first-tier stage. This preliminary Section 4(f) approval is

then incorporated into the first-tier EIS.

(2) The Section 4(f) approval will be finalized in the second-tier study. If no new Section 4(f) use, other than a *de minimis* impact, is identified in the second-tier study and if all possible planning to minimize harm has occurred, then the second-tier Section 4(f) approval may finalize the preliminary approval by reference to the first-tier documentation. Re-evaluation of the preliminary Section 4(f) approval is only needed to the extent that new or more detailed information available at the second-tier stage raises new Section 4(f) concerns not already considered.

(3) The final Section 4(f) approval may be made in the second-tier CE, EA, final EIS, ROD or FONSI.

(f) In accordance with §§ 771.105(a) and 771.133 of this chapter, the documentation supporting a Section 4(f) approval should be included in the EIS, EA, or for a project classified as a CE, in a separate document. If the Section 4(f) documentation cannot be included in the NEPA document, then it shall be presented in a separate document. The Section 4(f) documentation shall be developed by the applicant in cooperation with the Administration.

§ 774.9 Timing.

(a) The potential use of land from a Section 4(f) property shall be evaluated as early as practicable in the development of the action when alternatives to the proposed action are under study.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, for actions processed with EISs the Administration will make the Section 4(f) approval either in the final EIS or in the ROD. Where the Section 4(f) approval is documented in the final EIS, the Administration will summarize the basis for its Section 4(f) approval in the ROD. Actions requiring the use of Section 4(f) property, and proposed to be processed with a FONSI or classified as a CE, shall not proceed until notification by the Administration of Section 4(f) approval.

(c) After the CE, FONSI, or ROD has been processed, a separate Section 4(f) approval will be required, except as provided in § 774.13, if:

(1) A proposed modification of the alignment or design would require the use of Section 4(f) property; or

(2) The Administration determines that Section 4(f) applies to the use of a property; or

(3) A proposed modification of the alignment, design, or measures to minimize harm (after the original Section 4(f) approval) would result in a substantial increase in the amount of Section 4(f) property used, a substantial increase in the adverse impacts to Section 4(f) property, or a substantial reduction in the measures to minimize harm.

(d) A separate Section 4(f) approval required under paragraph (c) of this section will not necessarily require the preparation of a new or supplemental NEPA document. If a new or supplemental NEPA document is also required under § 771.130 of this chapter, then it should include the documentation supporting the separate Section 4(f) approval. Where a separate Section 4(f) approval is required, any activity not directly affected by the separate Section 4(f) approval can proceed during the analysis, consistent with § 771.130(f) of this chapter.

(e) Section 4(f) may apply to archeological sites discovered during construction, as set forth in § 774.11(f). In such cases, the Section 4(f) process will be expedited and any required evaluation of feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives will take account of the level of investment already made. The review process, including the consultation with other agencies, will be shortened as appropriate.

§ 774.11 Applicability.

(a) The Administration will determine the applicability of Section 4(f) in accordance with this part.

(b) When another Federal agency is the Federal lead agency for the NEPA process, the Administration shall make any required Section 4(f) approvals unless the Federal lead agency is another U.S. DOT agency.

(c) Consideration under Section 4(f) is not required when the official(s) with jurisdiction over a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge determine that the property, considered in its entirety, is not significant.

In the absence of such a determination, the Section 4(f) property will be presumed to be significant. The Administration will review a determination that a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge is not significant to assure its reasonableness.

(d) Where Federal lands or other public land holdings (e.g., State forests) are administered under statutes permitting management for multiple uses, and, in fact, are managed for multiple uses, Section 4(f) applies only to those portions of such lands which function for, or are designated in the plans of the administering agency as being for, significant park, recreation, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge purposes. The determination of which lands so function or are so designated, and the significance of those lands, shall be made by the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource. The Administration will review this determination to assure its reasonableness.

(e) In determining the applicability of Section 4(f) to historic sites, the Administration, in cooperation with the applicant, will consult with the official(s) with jurisdiction to identify all properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The Section 4(f) requirements apply to historic sites on or eligible for the National Register unless the Administration determines that an exception under § 774.13 applies.

(1) The Section 4(f) requirements apply only to historic sites on or eligible for the National Register unless the Administration determines that the application of Section 4(f) is otherwise appropriate.

(2) The Interstate System is not considered to be a historic site subject to Section 4(f), with the exception of those individual elements of the Interstate System formally identified by FHWA for Section 4(f) protection on the basis of national or exceptional historic significance.

(f) Section 4(f) applies to all archeological sites on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register, including those discovered during construction, except as set forth in § 774.13(b).

(g) Section 4(f) applies to those portions of federally designated Wild and

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Scenic Rivers that are otherwise eligible as historic sites, or that are publicly owned and function as, or are designated in a management plan as, a significant park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge. All other applicable requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. 1271–1287, must be satisfied, independent of the Section 4(f) approval.

(h) When a property formally reserved for a future transportation facility temporarily functions for park, recreation, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge purposes in the interim, the interim activity, regardless of duration, will not subject the property to Section 4(f).

(i) When a property is formally reserved for a future transportation facility before or at the same time a park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge is established and concurrent or joint planning or development of the transportation facility and the Section 4(f) resource occurs, then any resulting impacts of the transportation facility will not be considered a use as defined in § 774.17. Examples of such concurrent or joint planning or development include, but are not limited to:

(1) Designation or donation of property for the specific purpose of such concurrent development by the entity with jurisdiction or ownership of the property for both the potential transportation facility and the Section 4(f) property; or

(2) Designation, donation, planning, or development of property by two or more governmental agencies with jurisdiction for the potential transportation facility and the Section 4(f) property, in consultation with each other.

§ 774.13 Exceptions.

The Administration has identified various exceptions to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval. These exceptions include, but are not limited to:

(a) Restoration, rehabilitation, or maintenance of transportation facilities that are on or eligible for the National Register when:

(1) The Administration concludes, as a result of the consultation under 36 CFR 800.5, that such work will not adversely affect the historic qualities of

the facility that caused it to be on or eligible for the National Register, and

(2) The official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource have not objected to the Administration conclusion in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) Archeological sites that are on or eligible for the National Register when:

(1) The Administration concludes that the archeological resource is important chiefly because of what can be learned by data recovery and has minimal value for preservation in place. This exception applies both to situations where data recovery is undertaken and where the Administration decides, with agreement of the official(s) with jurisdiction, not to recover the resource; and

(2) The official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource have been consulted and have not objected to the Administration finding in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(c) Designations of park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites that are made, or determinations of significance that are changed, late in the development of a proposed action. With the exception of the treatment of archeological resources in § 774.9(e), the Administration may permit a project to proceed without consideration under Section 4(f) if the property interest in the Section 4(f) land was acquired for transportation purposes prior to the designation or change in the determination of significance and if an adequate effort was made to identify properties protected by Section 4(f) prior to acquisition. However, if it is reasonably foreseeable that a property would qualify as eligible for the National Register prior to the start of construction, then the property should be treated as a historic site for the purposes of this section.

(d) Temporary occupancies of land that are so minimal as to not constitute a use within the meaning of Section 4(f). The following conditions must be satisfied:

(1) Duration must be temporary, *i.e.*, less than the time needed for construction of the project, and there should be no change in ownership of the land;

(2) Scope of the work must be minor, *i.e.*, both the nature and the magnitude

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of the changes to the Section 4(f) property are minimal;

(3) There are no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts, nor will there be interference with the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property, on either a temporary or permanent basis;

(4) The land being used must be fully restored, *i.e.*, the property must be returned to a condition which is at least as good as that which existed prior to the project; and

(5) There must be documented agreement of the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource regarding the above conditions.

(e) Park road or parkway projects under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(f) Certain trails, paths, bikeways, and sidewalks, in the following circumstances:

(1) Trail-related projects funded under the Recreational Trails Program, 23 U.S.C. 206(h)(2);

(2) National Historic Trails and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, designated under the National Trails System Act, 16 U.S.C. 1241–1251, with the exception of those trail segments that are historic sites as defined in § 774.17;

(3) Trails, paths, bikeways, and sidewalks that occupy a transportation facility right-of-way without limitation to any specific location within that right-of-way, so long as the continuity of the trail, path, bikeway, or sidewalk is maintained; and

(4) Trails, paths, bikeways, and sidewalks that are part of the local transportation system and which function primarily for transportation.

(g) Transportation enhancement projects and mitigation activities, where:

(1) The use of the Section 4(f) property is solely for the purpose of preserving or enhancing an activity, feature, or attribute that qualifies the property for Section 4(f) protection; and

(2) The official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource agrees in writing to paragraph (g)(1) of this section.

§ 774.15 Constructive use determinations.

(a) A constructive use occurs when the transportation project does not incorporate land from a Section 4(f) property, but the project's proximity impacts are so severe that the protected activities, features, or attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) are substantially impaired. Substantial impairment occurs only when the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property are substantially diminished.

(b) If the project results in a constructive use of a nearby Section 4(f) property, the Administration shall evaluate that use in accordance with § 774.3(a).

(c) The Administration shall determine when there is a constructive use, but the Administration is not required to document each determination that a project would not result in a constructive use of a nearby Section 4(f) property. However, such documentation may be prepared at the discretion of the Administration.

(d) When a constructive use determination is made, it will be based upon the following:

(1) Identification of the current activities, features, or attributes of the property which qualify for protection under Section 4(f) and which may be sensitive to proximity impacts;

(2) An analysis of the proximity impacts of the proposed project on the Section 4(f) property. If any of the proximity impacts will be mitigated, only the net impact need be considered in this analysis. The analysis should also describe and consider the impacts which could reasonably be expected if the proposed project were not implemented, since such impacts should not be attributed to the proposed project; and

(3) Consultation, on the foregoing identification and analysis, with the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property.

(e) The Administration has reviewed the following situations and determined that a constructive use occurs when:

(1) The projected noise level increase attributable to the project substantially interferes with the use and enjoyment of a noise-sensitive facility of a property protected by Section 4(f), such as:

- (i) Hearing the performances at an outdoor amphitheater;
- (ii) Sleeping in the sleeping area of a campground;
- (iii) Enjoyment of a historic site where a quiet setting is a generally recognized feature or attribute of the site's significance;
- (iv) Enjoyment of an urban park where serenity and quiet are significant attributes; or
- (v) Viewing wildlife in an area of a wildlife and waterfowl refuge intended for such viewing.

(2) The proximity of the proposed project substantially impairs esthetic features or attributes of a property protected by Section 4(f), where such features or attributes are considered important contributing elements to the value of the property. Examples of substantial impairment to visual or esthetic qualities would be the location of a proposed transportation facility in such proximity that it obstructs or eliminates the primary views of an architecturally significant historical building, or substantially detracts from the setting of a Section 4(f) property which derives its value in substantial part due to its setting;

(3) The project results in a restriction of access which substantially diminishes the utility of a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, or a historic site;

(4) The vibration impact from construction or operation of the project substantially impairs the use of a Section 4(f) property, such as projected vibration levels that are great enough to physically damage a historic building or substantially diminish the utility of the building, unless the damage is repaired and fully restored consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, *i.e.*, the integrity of the contributing features must be returned to a condition which is substantially similar to that which existed prior to the project; or

(5) The ecological intrusion of the project substantially diminishes the value of wildlife habitat in a wildlife and waterfowl refuge adjacent to the project, substantially interferes with the access to a wildlife and waterfowl refuge when such access is necessary for established wildlife migration or critical life cycle processes, or substantially reduces the wildlife use of a wildlife and waterfowl refuge.

(f) The Administration has reviewed the following situations and determined that a constructive use does not occur when:

(1) Compliance with the requirements of 36 CFR 800.5 for proximity impacts of the proposed action, on a site listed on or eligible for the National Register, results in an agreement of "no historic properties affected" or "no adverse effect;"

(2) The impact of projected traffic noise levels of the proposed highway project on a noise-sensitive activity do not exceed the FHWA noise abatement criteria as contained in Table 1 in part 772 of this chapter, or the projected operational noise levels of the proposed transit project do not exceed the noise impact criteria for a Section 4(f) activity in the FTA guidelines for transit noise and vibration impact assessment;

(3) The projected noise levels exceed the relevant threshold in paragraph (f)(2) of this section because of high existing noise, but the increase in the projected noise levels if the proposed project is constructed, when compared with the projected noise levels if the project is not built, is barely perceptible (3 dBA or less);

(4) There are proximity impacts to a Section 4(f) property, but a governmental agency's right-of-way acquisition or adoption of project location, or the Administration's approval of a final environmental document, established the location for the proposed transportation project before the designation, establishment, or change in the significance of the property. However, if it is reasonably foreseeable that a property would qualify as eligible for the National Register prior to the start of construction, then the property should be treated as a historic site for the purposes of this section; or

(5) Overall (combined) proximity impacts caused by a proposed project do not substantially impair the activities, features, or attributes that qualify a property for protection under Section 4(f);

(6) Proximity impacts will be mitigated to a condition equivalent to, or better than, that which would occur if the project were not built, as determined after consultation with the official(s) with jurisdiction;

(7) Change in accessibility will not substantially diminish the utilization of the Section 4(f) property; or

(8) Vibration levels from project construction activities are mitigated, through advance planning and monitoring of the activities, to levels that do not cause a substantial impairment of protected activities, features, or attributes of the Section 4(f) property.

§ 774.17 Definitions.

The definitions contained in 23 U.S.C. 101(a) are applicable to this part. In addition, the following definitions apply:

Administration. The FHWA or FTA, whichever is making the approval for the transportation program or project at issue. A reference herein to the Administration means the State when the State is functioning as the FHWA or FTA in carrying out responsibilities delegated or assigned to the State in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 325, 326, 327, or other applicable law.

All possible planning. All possible planning means that all reasonable measures identified in the Section 4(f) evaluation to minimize harm or mitigate for adverse impacts and effects must be included in the project.

(1) With regard to public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, the measures may include (but are not limited to): design modifications or design goals; replacement of land or facilities of comparable value and function; or monetary compensation to enhance the remaining property or to mitigate the adverse impacts of the project in other ways.

(2) With regard to historic sites, the measures normally serve to preserve the historic activities, features, or attributes of the site as agreed by the Administration and the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) re-

source in accordance with the consultation process under 36 CFR part 800.

(3) In evaluating the reasonableness of measures to minimize harm under § 774.3(a)(2), the Administration will consider the preservation purpose of the statute and:

(i) The views of the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property;

(ii) Whether the cost of the measures is a reasonable public expenditure in light of the adverse impacts of the project on the Section 4(f) property and the benefits of the measure to the property, in accordance with § 771.105(d) of this chapter; and

(iii) Any impacts or benefits of the measures to communities or environmental resources outside of the Section 4(f) property.

(4) All possible planning does not require analysis of feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives, since such analysis will have already occurred in the context of searching for feasible and prudent alternatives that avoid Section 4(f) properties altogether under § 774.3(a)(1), or is not necessary in the case of a *de minimis* impact determination under § 774.3(b).

(5) A *de minimis* impact determination under § 774.3(b) subsumes the requirement for all possible planning to minimize harm by reducing the impacts on the Section 4(f) property to a *de minimis* level.

Applicant. The Federal, State, or local government authority, proposing a transportation project, that the Administration works with to conduct environmental studies and prepare environmental documents. For transportation actions implemented by the Federal government on Federal lands, the Administration or the Federal land management agency may take on the responsibilities of the applicant described herein.

CE. Refers to a Categorical Exclusion, which denotes an action with no individual or cumulative significant environmental effect pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.4 and § 771.117 of this chapter; unusual circumstances are taken into account in making categorical exclusion determinations.

De minimis impact. (1) For historic sites, *de minimis* impact means that the Administration has determined, in accordance with 36 CFR part 800 that no historic property is affected by the project or that the project will have “no adverse effect” on the historic property in question.

(2) For parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, a *de minimis* impact is one that will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f).

EA. Refers to an Environmental Assessment, which is a document prepared pursuant to 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and §771.119 of this title for a proposed project that is not categorically excluded but for which an EIS is not clearly required.

EIS. Refers to an Environmental Impact Statement, which is a document prepared pursuant to NEPA, 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, and §§771.123 and 771.125 of this chapter for a proposed project that is likely to cause significant impacts on the environment.

Feasible and prudent avoidance alternative. (1) A feasible and prudent avoidance alternative avoids using Section 4(f) property and does not cause other severe problems of a magnitude that substantially outweighs the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property. In assessing the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property, it is appropriate to consider the relative value of the resource to the preservation purpose of the statute.

(2) An alternative is not feasible if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgment.

(3) An alternative is not prudent if:

(i) It compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need;

(ii) It results in unacceptable safety or operational problems;

(iii) After reasonable mitigation, it still causes:

(A) Severe social, economic, or environmental impacts;

(B) Severe disruption to established communities;

(C) Severe disproportionate impacts to minority or low income populations; or

(D) Severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;

(iv) It results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational costs of an extraordinary magnitude;

(v) It causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or

(vi) It involves multiple factors in paragraphs (3)(i) through (3)(v) of this definition, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude.

FONSI. Refers to a Finding of No Significant Impact prepared pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.13 and §771.121 of this chapter.

Historic site. For purposes of this part, the term “historic site” includes any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register. The term includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization that are included in, or are eligible for inclusion in, the National Register.

Official(s) with jurisdiction. (1) In the case of historic properties, the official with jurisdiction is the SHPO for the State wherein the property is located or, if the property is located on tribal land, the THPO. If the property is located on tribal land but the Indian tribe has not assumed the responsibilities of the SHPO as provided for in the National Historic Preservation Act, then a representative designated by such Indian tribe shall be recognized as an official with jurisdiction in addition to the SHPO. When the ACHP is involved in a consultation concerning a property under Section 106 of the NHPA, the ACHP is also an official with jurisdiction over that resource for purposes of this part. When the Section 4(f) property is a National Historic Landmark, the National Park Service is also an official with jurisdiction over that resource for purposes of this part.

(2) In the case of public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, the official(s) with jurisdiction are the official(s) of the agency or agencies that own or administer the

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property in question and who are empowered to represent the agency on matters related to the property.

(3) In the case of portions of Wild and Scenic Rivers to which Section 4(f) applies, the official(s) with jurisdiction are the official(s) of the Federal agency or agencies that own or administer the affected portion of the river corridor in question. For State administered, federally designated rivers (section 2(a)(ii) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. 1273(a)(ii)), the officials with jurisdiction include both the State agency designated by the respective Governor and the Secretary of the Interior.

ROD. Refers to a Record of Decision prepared pursuant to 40 CFR 1505.2 and § 771.127 of this chapter.

Section 4(f) evaluation. Refers to the documentation prepared to support the granting of a Section 4(f) approval under § 774.3(a), unless preceded by the word “programmatically.” A “programmatically Section 4(f) evaluation” is the documentation prepared pursuant to § 774.3(d) that authorizes subsequent project-level Section 4(f) approvals as described therein.

Section 4(f) Property. Section 4(f) property means publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance.

Use. Except as set forth in §§ 774.11 and 774.13, a “use” of Section 4(f) property occurs:

(1) When land is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility;

(2) When there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in terms of the statute’s preservation purpose as determined by the criteria in § 774.13(d); or

(3) When there is a constructive use of a Section 4(f) property as determined by the criteria in § 774.15.

PART 777—MITIGATION OF IMPACTS TO WETLANDS AND NATURAL HABITAT

Sec.

777.1 Purpose.

777.2 Definitions.

777.3 Background.

777.5 Federal participation.

777.7 Evaluation of impacts.

777.9 Mitigation of impacts.

777.11 Other considerations.

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; 49 U.S.C. 303; 23 U.S.C. 101(a), 103, 109(h), 133(b)(1), (b)(11), and (d)(2), 138, 315; E.O. 11990; DOT Order 5660.1A; 49 CFR 1.48(b).

SOURCE: 65 FR 82924, Dec. 29, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

§ 777.1 Purpose.

To provide policy and procedures for the evaluation and mitigation of adverse environmental impacts to wetlands and natural habitat resulting from Federal-aid projects funded pursuant to provisions of title 23, U.S. Code. These policies and procedures shall be applied by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to projects under the Federal Lands Highway Program to the extent such application is deemed appropriate by the FHWA.

§ 777.2 Definitions.

In addition to those contained in 23 U.S.C. 101(a), the following definitions shall apply as used in this part:

Biogeochemical transformations means those changes in chemical compounds and substances which naturally occur in ecosystems. Examples are the carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus cycles in nature, in which these elements are incorporated from inorganic substances into organic matter and recycled on a continuing basis.

Compensatory mitigation means restoration, enhancement, creation, and under exceptional circumstances, preservation, of wetlands, wetland buffer areas, and other natural habitats, carried out to replace or compensate for the loss of wetlands or natural habitat area or functional capacity resulting from Federal-aid projects funded pursuant to provisions of title 23, U.S. Code. Compensatory mitigation usually occurs in advance of or concurrent with the impacts to be mitigated, but may occur after such impacts in special circumstances.

Mitigation bank means a site where wetlands and/or other aquatic resources or natural habitats are restored, created, enhanced, or in exceptional circumstances, preserved, expressly for the purpose of providing

compensatory mitigation in advance of authorized impacts to similar resources. For purposes of the Clean Water Act, Section 404 (33 U.S.C. 1344), use of a mitigation bank can only be authorized when impacts are unavoidable.

Natural habitat means a complex of natural, primarily native or indigenous vegetation, not currently subject to cultivation or artificial landscaping, a primary purpose of which is to provide habitat for wildlife, either terrestrial or aquatic. For purposes of this part, habitat has the same meaning as natural habitat. This definition excludes rights-of-way that are acquired with Federal transportation funds specifically for highway purposes.

Net gain of wetlands means a wetland resource conservation and management principle under which, over the long term, unavoidable losses of wetlands area or functional capacity due to highway projects are offset by gains at a ratio greater than 1:1, through restoration, enhancement, preservation, or creation of wetlands or associated areas critical to the protection or conservation of wetland functions. This definition specifically excludes natural habitat, as defined in this section, other than wetlands.

On-site, in-kind mitigation means compensatory mitigation which replaces wetlands or natural habitat area or functions lost as a result of a highway project with the same or like wetland or habitat type and functions adjacent or contiguous to the site of the impact.

Practicable means available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics, in light of overall project purposes.

Service area of a mitigation bank means that the service area of a wetland or natural habitat mitigation bank shall be consistent with that in the Federal Guidance for the Establishment, Use and Operation of Mitigation Banks (60 FR 58605, November 28, 1995), *i.e.*, the designated area (e.g., watershed, county) wherein a bank can be expected to provide appropriate compensation for impacts to wetlands and/or other aquatic or natural habitat resources.

Wetland or habitat enhancement means activities conducted in existing wetlands or other natural habitat to achieve specific management objectives or provide conditions which previously did not exist, and which increase one or more ecosystem functions. Enhancement may involve trade-offs between the resource structure, function, and values; a positive change in one may result in negative effects to other functions. Examples of activities which may be carried out to enhance wetlands or natural habitats include, but are not limited to, alteration of hydrologic regime, vegetation management, erosion control, fencing, integrated pest management and control, and fertilization.

Wetland or habitat establishment period means a period of time agreed to by the FHWA, State DOT, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as necessary to establish wetland or natural habitat functional capacity in a compensatory mitigation project sufficient to compensate wetlands or habitat losses due to impacts of Federal-aid highway projects. The establishment period may vary depending on the specific wetland or habitat type being developed.

Wetland or habitat functional capacity means the ability of a wetland or natural habitat to perform natural functions, such as provide wildlife habitat, support biodiversity, store surface water, or perform biogeochemical transformations, as determined by scientific functional assessment. Natural functions of wetlands include, but are not limited to, those listed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at 33 CFR 320.4(b)(2)(i) through (viii).

Wetland or habitat preservation means the protection of ecologically important wetlands, other aquatic resources, or other natural habitats in perpetuity through the implementation of appropriate legal and physical mechanisms. Preservation of wetlands for compensatory mitigation purposes may include protection of upland areas adjacent to wetlands as necessary to ensure protection and/or enhancement of the aquatic ecosystem.

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Wetland or habitat restoration means the reestablishment of wetlands or natural habitats on a site where they formerly existed or exist in a substantially degraded state.

Wetland or wetlands means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

Wetlands or habitat mitigation credit means a unit of wetlands or habitat mitigation, defined either by area or a measure of functional capacity through application of scientific functional assessment. With respect to mitigation banks, this definition means the same as that in the Federal Guidance for the Establishment, Use, and Operation of Mitigation Banks.

§ 777.3 Background.

(a) Executive Order 11990 (42 FR 26961, 3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 121) Protection of Wetlands, and DOT Order 5660.1A,¹ Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands, emphasize the important functions and values inherent in the Nation's wetlands. Federal agencies are directed to avoid new construction in wetlands unless the head of the agency determines that:

(1) There is no practicable alternative to such construction, and

(2) The proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

(b) Sections 103 and 133 of title 23, U.S. Code, identify additional approaches for mitigation and management of impacts to wetlands and natural habitats which result from projects funded pursuant to title 23, U.S. Code, as eligible for participation with title 23, U.S. Code, funds.

(c) 33 CFR parts 320 through 330, Regulatory Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Section 404, Clean Water

Act and 40 CFR part 230, Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines for the Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material, establish requirements for the permitting of discharge of dredge or fill material in wetlands and other waters of the United States.

(d) Federal Guidance for the Establishment, Use, and Operation of Mitigation Banks presents guidance for the use of ecological mitigation banks as compensatory mitigation in the Section 404 Regulatory Program for unavoidable impacts to wetlands and other aquatic resources.

(e) Interagency Cooperation—Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (50 CFR part 402), presents regulations establishing interagency consultation procedures relative to impacts to species listed under the authority of the Act and their habitats as required by Section 7, Interagency Coordination, of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536).

§ 777.5 Federal participation.

(a) Those measures which the FHWA and a State DOT find appropriate and necessary to mitigate adverse environmental impacts to wetlands and natural habitats are eligible for Federal participation where the impacts are the result of projects funded pursuant to title 23, U.S. Code. The justification for the cost of proposed mitigation measures should be considered in the same context as any other public expenditure; that is, the proposed mitigation represents a reasonable public expenditure when weighed against other social, economic, and environmental values, and the benefit realized is commensurate with the proposed expenditure. Mitigation measures shall give like consideration to traffic needs, safety, durability, and economy of maintenance of the highway.

(b) It is FHWA policy to permit, consistent with the limits set forth in this part, the expenditure of title 23, U.S. Code, funds for activities required for the planning, design, construction, monitoring, and establishment of wetlands and natural habitat mitigation projects, and acquisition of land or interests therein.

¹DOT Order 5660.1A is available for inspection and copying from FHWA headquarters and field offices as prescribed at 49 CFR part 7.

§ 777.7 Evaluation of impacts.

(a) The reasonableness of the public expenditure and extent of Federal participation with title 23, U.S. Code, funds shall be directly related to:

(1) The importance of the impacted wetlands and natural habitats;

(2) The extent of highway impacts on the wetlands and natural habitats, as determined through an appropriate, interdisciplinary, impact assessment; and

(3) Actions necessary to comply with the Clean Water Act, Section 404, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and other relevant Federal statutes.

(b) Evaluation of the importance of the impacted wetlands and natural habitats shall consider:

(1) Wetland and natural habitat functional capacity;

(2) Relative importance of these functions to the total wetland or natural habitat resource of the area;

(3) Other factors such as uniqueness, esthetics, or cultural values; and

(4) Input from the appropriate resource management agencies through interagency coordination.

(c) A determination of the highway impact should focus on both the short- and long-term affects of the project on wetland or natural habitat functional capacity, consistent with 40 CFR part 1500, 40 CFR 1502.16, 33 CFR 320.4, and the FHWA's environmental compliance regulations, found at 23 CFR part 771.

§ 777.9 Mitigation of impacts.

(a) Actions eligible for Federal funding. There are a number of actions that can be taken to minimize the impact of highway projects on wetlands or natural habitats. The following actions qualify for Federal-aid highway funding:

(1) Avoidance and minimization of impacts to wetlands or natural habitats through realignment and special design, construction features, or other measures.

(2) Compensatory mitigation alternatives, either inside or outside of the right-of-way. This includes, but is not limited to, such measures as on-site mitigation, when that alternative is determined to be the preferred approach by the appropriate regulatory agency; improvement of existing de-

graded or historic wetlands or natural habitats through restoration or enhancement on or off site; creation of new wetlands; and under exceptional circumstances, preservation of existing wetlands or natural habitats on or off site. Restoration of wetlands is generally preferable to enhancement or creation of new wetlands.

(3) Improvements to existing wetlands or natural habitats. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, construction or modification of water level control structures or ditches, establishment of natural vegetation, re-contouring of a site, installation or removal of irrigation, drainage, or other water distribution systems, integrated pest management, installation of fencing, monitoring, and other measures to protect, enhance, or restore the wetland or natural habitat character of a site.

(4) Mitigation banks. In accordance with all applicable Federal law (including regulations), with respect to participation in compensatory mitigation related to a project funded under title 23, U.S. Code, that has an impact on wetlands or natural habitat occurring within the service area of a mitigation bank, preference shall be given, to the maximum extent practicable, to the use of the mitigation bank, if the bank contains sufficient available credits to offset the impact and the bank is approved in accordance with the Federal Guidance for the Establishment, Use, and Operation of Mitigation Banks, or other agreement between appropriate agencies.

(b) Mitigation banking alternatives eligible for participation with Federal-aid funds including such measures as the following:

(1) Mitigation banks in which mitigation credits are purchased by State DOTs to mitigate impacts to wetlands or natural habitats due to projects funded under title 23, U.S. Code, including privately owned banks or those established with private funds to mitigate wetland or natural habitat losses.

(2) Single purpose banks established by and for the use of a State DOT with Federal-aid participation; or multipurpose publicly owned banks, established with public, non-title 23 Federal highway funds, in which credits may be

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purchased by highway agencies using title 23 highway funds on a per-credit basis.

(c) Contributions to statewide and regional efforts to conserve, restore, enhance and create wetlands or natural habitats. Federal-aid funds may participate in the development of statewide and regional wetlands conservation plans, including any efforts and plans authorized pursuant to the Water Resources Development Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-640, 104 Stat. 4604). Contributions to these efforts may occur in advance of project construction only if such efforts are consistent with all applicable requirements of Federal law and regulations and State transportation planning processes.

(d) Mitigation or restoration of historic impacts to wetlands and natural habitats caused by past highway projects funded pursuant to title 23, U.S. Code, even if there is no current federally funded highway project in the immediate vicinity. These impacts must be related to transportation projects funded under the authority of title 23, U.S. Code.

§ 777.11 Other considerations.

(a) The development of measures proposed to mitigate impacts to wetlands or natural habitats shall include consultation with appropriate State and Federal agencies.

(b) Federal-aid funds shall not participate in the replacement of wetlands or natural habitats absent sufficient assurances, such as, but not limited to, deed restrictions, fee ownership, permanent easement, or performance bond, that the area will be maintained as a wetland or natural habitat.

(c) The acquisition of proprietary interests in replacement wetlands or natural habitats as a mitigation measure may be in fee simple, by easement, or by other appropriate legally recognized instrument, such as a banking instrument legally approved by the appropriate regulatory agency. The acquisition of mitigation credits in wetland or natural habitat mitigation banks shall be accomplished through a legally recognized instrument, such as permanent

easement, deed restriction, or legally approved mitigation banking instrument, which provides for the protection and permanent continuation of the wetland or natural habitat nature of the mitigation.

(d) A State DOT may acquire privately owned lands in cooperation with another public agency or third party. Such an arrangement may accomplish greater benefits than would otherwise be accomplished by the individual agency acting alone.

(e) A State DOT may transfer the title to, or enter into an agreement with, an appropriate public natural resource management agency to manage lands acquired outside the right-of-way without requiring a credit to Federal funds. Any such transfer of title or agreement shall require the continued use of the lands for the purpose for which they were acquired. In the event the purpose is no longer served, the lands and interests therein shall immediately revert to the State DOT for proper disposition.

(f) The reasonable costs of acquiring lands or interests therein to provide replacement lands with equivalent wetlands or natural habitat area or functional capacity associated with these areas are eligible for Federal participation.

(g) The objective in mitigating impacts to wetlands in the Federal-aid highway program is to implement the policy of a net gain of wetlands on a program wide basis.

(h) Certain activities to ensure the viability of compensatory mitigation wetlands or natural habitats during the period of establishment are eligible for Federal-aid participation. These include, but are not limited to, such activities as repair or adjustment of water control structures, pest control, irrigation, fencing modifications, replacement of plantings, and mitigation site monitoring. The establishment period should be specifically determined by the mitigation agreement among the mitigation planners prior to beginning any compensatory mitigation activities.